

THE Story OF Bad Boll

BUILDING THEOLOGICAL BRIDGES

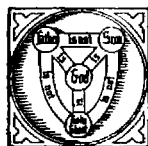


The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod

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OF
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BUILDING THEOLOGICAL BRIDGES

By F. E. MAYER



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Preface

The Story of Bad Boll was written to give others, especially our pastors, an opportunity to share the rich experiences which the participants of the Bad Boll conferences were privileged to enjoy. The reader will kindly remember the problems which confronted the author in writing this report, particularly the problem of condensing the vast amount of material produced during four weeks of intensive study and the no less difficult problem of reproducing in idiomatic English the modern German theological terminology. Drs. Paul M. Bretscher and Theodore Graebner have carefully checked the report on the basis of their own extensive notes. It is the sincere hope that *The Story of Bad Boll* may deepen in the reader a keen appreciation of the glorious opportunities and the tremendous responsibilities entrusted to our Church.

F. E. MAYER

CHAPTER I

Preparations for Bad Boll

In his *Christliche Dogmatik* (I, 224 f.) Dr. Pieper states that during the middle of the last century a close relation existed between German Lutheran and Missouri Synod theologians; that, however, during the last decades of the previous century a gradual alienation took place, until in the first decades of the current century German theologians completely ignored the contributions of our theologians. Dr. Pieper thought that the chief reason for completely ignoring us was due to the fact that while our Synod represented a strictly confessional theology, the German theologians viewed such a theology as "repristination theology" and wholly inadequate in the light of modern research, with its emphasis on the empirical method. He was therefore of the opinion that an unbridgeable chasm separated the Missouri Synod and the German theology. And then Dr. Pieper adds these almost prophetic words: "But God's grace can use these catastrophic events [the destruction of the First World War] to bring about a change." Unfortunately no efforts were made on either side of the Atlantic after the conclusion of the First World War to establish contacts between Missouri Synod theologians and the leaders of German Lutheranism.

American Lutheranism today has a vital stake in German Lutheranism. Lutheranism on the European continent is today in a critical condition, and its weal or woe will affect world Lutheranism. It seems providential that even during the war American statesmen and churchmen were mapping a program of activity to be inaugurated immediately upon cessation of hostilities. The leaders of our Synod were in the front ranks of those who saw the need and were ready to launch an all-out program not only of physical relief, but of real spiritual reconstruction. Such an undertaking required vision and courage. A program of physical relief quite naturally found universal approval, and there was a generous outpouring of gifts for this program. But the spiritual reconstruction was equally, if not more, important. The years of the *Kirchenkampf*, of concentration camps and underground movements, and the terrors of the war years had brought great changes in the religious life of the German Church. The final political collapse necessitated a complete rehabilitation of

the churches. Could our Synod make a contribution in this area? Would such a contribution be welcome? And if so, how could it be best implemented? The fact is, that the vast majority of German theologians had an altogether false impression of our Synod's theology. Some thought that we were steeped in traditionalism, dead orthodoxy, and obscurantism. There was an apathy, even an antipathy, toward our church body. Fortunately, in the performance of their duty as occupation personnel our Army chaplains had made valuable contacts with German pastors and church leaders, and these in turn learned to know our Synod from firsthand sources. They soon learned that the very characteristic, its confessionalism, which they had decried, was the source of our Synod's virility, and that in our Church there seemed to be a happy combination of an earnest desire to retain purity of doctrine and a keen sense of our obligation to share our temporal and spiritual blessings with others. For this reason the Emergency Planning Council not only inaugurated a physical relief program, but also made available for the German pastors Pieper's *Christliche Dogmatik* and Walther's *Gesetz und Evangelium*. But this was not enough. Through its Board for Home Missions in Europe, Synod had given financial aid to the Lutheran Free Church, and this Board as well as the Emergency Planning Council resolved to continue and expand this program, particularly in assisting the Free Churches in re-establishing a theological seminary. But also this was not sufficient. The idea of Lutheran free churches is foreign to most European Lutherans, and they find it difficult to understand the significance of the free church. It was therefore considered of prime importance that representatives of our Synod make personal and direct contacts with leaders of the Lutheran State Churches. For this reason Drs. J. W. Behnken and L. Meyer went to Europe in the fall of 1945 to confer with the leaders both of the Free Churches and the Lutheran State Churches. These contacts were continued and new ones established by Dr. F. E. Mayer in the summers of 1946 and 1947, and by Drs. Martin Graebner, L. Meyer, and President Behnken during the fall of 1947. These representatives met the leading theologians and churchmen, spoke before theological students, addressed pastoral conferences, and spoke before large groups of Lutheran lay people. But as effective as these contacts undoubtedly were, they were not sufficient.

In the fall of 1947 Dr. L. Meyer invited representatives of the Free Churches and the State Churches to discuss the possibility of conducting free conferences between German Lutheran theologians and representatives of the Missouri Synod. Bishops J. Bender, H.

Meiser, Th. Wurm, President P. H. Petersen, Drs. M. Graebner, K. J. Arndt of Military Government, and Eugene Gerstenmaier wholeheartedly endorsed the plan and immediately appointed a committee to arrange for a series of free conferences in which theologians from two continents would have an opportunity to share with each other their respective heritage. The conferences were to be a *Begegnung*, a meeting of minds, dominated by mutual respect and confidence, in which significant and timely points of doctrine could be studied in the light of Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. It must be noted that a tremendous change in the theological world had taken place, especially regarding the significance of the Lutheran Confessions. The German committee therefore suggested that the topic for the proposed *Begegnung* should be centered upon the Augsburg Confession, more specifically, "A re-examination of certain articles of the Augsburg Confession in the light of the problems of our time."

The Emergency Planning Council immediately endorsed the entire plan and appointed an American committee to make the necessary preparations. Final arrangements for the *Begegnung* were made when Drs. E. Gerstenmaier and Karl Arndt visited the United States early last spring. It was agreed that American theologians should present a paper on each of the selected topics and that outstanding German professors and theologians be invited to deliver a co-essay on each topic. The President of the Missouri Synod was asked to issue the official invitations both to the co-essayists and the guests. The Bavarian Lutheran Church office served as agent to solicit the co-operation of the various *Landeskirchen* in selecting the delegates. The Emergency Planning Council asked Drs. Paul M. Bretscher, Theo. Graebner, and F. E. Mayer to serve as essayists. At the urgent request of the German representatives to enlarge the staff, Profs. Walter A. Baepler and A. O. Fuerbringer were appointed. This proved to be a very wise counsel and added tremendously to the success of the conference. At the request of the German committee, Dr. Behnken served as chairman and spiritual leader of the American delegation. His devotional addresses, his excellent leadership as chairman of the meetings, and his wise counsel in public and in private were of inestimable value to the success of the meetings at Bad Boll. Dr. L. Meyer had charge of all the arrangements. Without his guidance and counsel it would have been impossible to conduct such an undertaking, especially in view of the disturbed conditions resulting from the currency reform and the resultant last-minute changes in the program.

We were exceedingly fortunate that Dr. Karl Arndt was able

to secure the facilities available at Bad Boll for housing and lodging 150 guests during each of the three conferences. Bad Boll, near Goeppingen in Swabia, was established as a spa in the sixteenth century, and the healing properties of its sulphur springs attracted many suffering from rheumatism. In the course of the centuries a number of buildings housing 400 guests have been erected at this celebrated health resort. In 1852 Christoph Blumhardt purchased the resort. Blumhardt had gained a great following in his parish at Moettlingen, Wuerttemberg, because in his pastoral ministrations he apparently combined the cure of the soul with the cure of the body. Many people from far and near were attracted to him, and since he was unable to take care of them in his own home, he decided to purchase Bad Boll. For twenty-eight years hundreds of people sought his spiritual ministrations as guests in his institution. Blumhardt cannot be classified as a divine healer, for in ministering to the sick his chief interest was to deal with man's sin and to help them to a deeper knowledge of Christ, and thus to peace of mind. After the death of Blumhardt's sons the institution was purchased by the Moravian Church, which is now conducting it as a health resort, a home for refugees, and as a place for conferences, notably the *Evangelische Akademie*. Lying in the foothills of the Swabian Alps and having no military significance, Bad Boll went through the war unscathed. It is one of the very few places available in Germany today for meetings such as we planned. Without the assistance of the Military Government under Military Governor Chas. La Follette and Mr. J. Steiner and *Das Evangelische Hilfswerk*, the meetings probably could not have been held. The American delegates are especially indebted to the invaluable assistance given by Chief Chaplain Maddox, who assigned Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Gaertner as military escort. The hospitality of the Gaertners, the Heuers, Arndts, and Steiners helped greatly to lighten the burden of our assignment. Mrs. Arndt and her assistant, Miss Renata Kauert, deserve a special vote of thanks.

Three seminars, each of nine days' duration, were held: the first from June 23 to July 2, attended by 110; the second from July 6 to 15, attended by 80; the third from July 16 to 25, attended by 121. This large attendance is remarkable when one considers the unbelievably great problems caused by the currency reform inaugurated three days before the first seminar. All guests managed somehow to come to Bad Boll except those from the Russian Zone, because travel restrictions did not permit them to leave their zone. Lutherans from the Lutheran provincial churches as well as from the *unierte Kirchen* of

the Western zones, and representatives from the Lutheran Free Churches had been invited. Five bishops were present, a large number of *Oberkirchenraete*, *Dekane*, *Proepste*, theological professors of leading universities, leading pastors, many of whom had acquired the higher theological degrees. Naturally various streams of theological thought were represented at each seminar. However, all participants were adherents of the Augsburg Confession, which served as the basis for the discussions.

The program for the three seminars was identical except that different German co-essayists had been invited for each seminar. Unfortunately, at the last minute substitutes for the German co-essayist from the Russian Zone had to be found. But this late change did not interfere with the success of the meetings. The program for the three seminars follows:

1st day: Registration, orientation, opening service.

2d day: The Significance of the *Confessio Augustana* for the Ecclesiastical and Theological Development of Lutheranism in the United States and in Germany.

3d day: The Doctrine of Justification, CA IV.

4th day: The Means of Grace, CA V.

5th day: The Essence of the Church, Article VII.

6th day: The Church and the Ministry, CA VIII and XXVIII.

7th day: The Lord's Supper, CA X.

8th day: Church and State, CA XVI.

9th day: Summary, Conclusions, Closing Remarks.

A very heavy schedule was arranged, and every minute of the day was utilized. Two welcome breaks were the splendid concert by Miss Lise Lore Haeger, an accomplished pianist, and a social evening in which the German participants outdid themselves to show their appreciation in speeches, songs, and entertainment. — The typical daily schedule was as follows:

7:45 A. M. Morning Devotions.

8:00 A. M. Breakfast.

9:00 A. M.—12:30 P. M. Presentation of the day's topic by an American and a German theologian.

1:00—3:00 P. M. Dinner and recess.

3:00—4:00 P. M. Sectional meetings to discuss the topic of the day.

4:30—6:30 P. M. Plenary meeting in which the leaders of the sections submitted the questions, critiques, and problems raised in

the respective sections. Since not all problems could be answered in the plenary session, the mealtime and recesses were devoted to a continuation of the discussions.

6:30—8:00 P. M. Supper and recess.

8:15—10:00 P. M. The evening devotions were followed by lectures on such phases of our Synod's work as young people's work, the program of elementary and higher education, home and foreign mission work, congregational organization and activity, trends in modern theology. These lectures were supplemented by films on vacation Bible schools, Walther League activities, our colleges and seminaries, the Call of the Cross, prepared by Synod's Department of Publicity and Missionary Education.

CHAPTER II

The Seminars

In his words of welcome, Bishop H. Meiser said in part: "God never takes something from us without giving us a greater gift in return. This greater gift is our meeting on the basis of the Augsburg Confession. This *Begegnung* is unprecedented, *erstmalig*. Strange as it may seem, we are confronted by the fact that in the land of the Reformation the Lutheran Church today is on the defensive. We must defend the Lutheran theology against such theses as: 'There is a straight line from Luther to Hitler.' 'Lutheran doctrine must be blamed for all the aberrations.' There is the attempt to unite churches, and all distinctive characteristics of Lutheranism are to be erased, and Lutheran Christians are to be tolerated merely as Christians with a few unique patterns, but not with a confessional distinctiveness. The question confronting us really is: Will the Lutheran Church as a Lutheran Church continue, or will the Lutheran Church be buried at Eisenach [the meeting of EKID]? This prompts us to say that the voice of Lutheran theology must be sounded clearly, and to this end the meeting at Bad Boll must serve. The first and foremost problem at Bad Boll is: We must again rehabilitate ourselves as Lutherans."

The Confessional Principle

Ever since 1934 there has been an awakening of the confessional principle in many sections of German Lutheranism. The question was asked: Do the Lutheran Confessions have a message for Lutherans today? The tensions between Reformed and Lutheran theology, the complete collapse of the former Liberal Theology, the utter hopelessness, and other factors had created a new interest in the Augsburg Confession, the basic confession of the Lutheran Church. It was therefore proper that the first day of each conference was devoted to the topic "The Significance of the Augustana for the Ecclesiastical and Theological Development Both in the United States and in Germany." In order to impress all with the centrality of the Augsburg Confession at the Bad Boll discussions, each participant was given a reprint of the scholarly and critical 1930 Jubilee Edition of the Augsburg Confession. Incidentally, the editor of this edition, Professor Bornkamm, was one of the participants at Bad Boll.

It was taken for granted that the German theologians were not very familiar with the significance of the Augustana for American Lutheranism. Therefore three essays were devoted at each session to the discussion of the influence of the Augustana on American Lutheranism.

Prof. W. A. Baepler traced the history of American Lutheranism from the earliest settlement of Dutch-German Lutherans, ca. 1623, stressing particularly Muehlenberg's influence on the theological and ecclesiastical development of Lutheranism in America. However, after Muehlenberg's death unionism and rationalism finally so gained the upper hand in Lutheranism that during the closing decades of the eighteenth and the first decades of the nineteenth century the Augsburg Confession was practically eliminated in large sections of American Lutheranism. During the first 200 years of its existence in America, Lutheranism was a relatively small and insignificant group, and as a church body was torn asunder by internal doctrinal dissensions and lacked, with the exception of Muehlenberg, strong leadership. The influence, therefore, of the Augsburg Confession on American Lutheranism during this period was relatively insignificant.

The second part of the general topic was designed to acquaint the Germans with that part of the history of the Lutheran Church which led to the awakening of confessionalism. Prof. F. E. Mayer briefly traced the coming of the so-called "Old Lutherans" to America, the beginnings of the Ohio and Missouri Synods, the free conferences and the events leading up to the formation of the General Council and the Synodical Conference, and the ultimate victory of the Augsburg Confession over the former latitudinarian principles.

The American essayist showed that the charge of symbolatry, which has been made against Walther, Krauth, Schmauck, and others, is unfounded, since these confessionally conscious theologians subscribed wholeheartedly to the principle of *Sola Scriptura*. A genuine Scripture theologian is also a confessional theologian, for an inner necessity compels him to abide unswervingly by a confession which is in full accord with the Scriptures and which repudiates all errors contrary to Scripture. The Lutheran Confessions meet this requirement, and the confessional Lutherans wholeheartedly subscribed to the Augsburg Confession. However, they recognized that the other Lutheran Confessions were a necessary exposition and emendation of the Augsburg Confession, and especially important in clearly stating Scripture truths in opposition to the heresies and, therefore, equally binding. The charge that Walther and his co-workers in returning to the Confessions became advocates of a repristination

theology is unfounded. True, they returned to the theology of the sixteenth century, but in so doing they actually went back to the theology of the New Testament. For that reason every pastor in the Missouri Synod is required to subscribe to the Confessions with a *quia*. True confessionalism and genuine orthodoxy invariably become the mother of true church activity.

Prof. A. O. Fuerbringer discussed the current situation in the various Lutheran bodies with particular reference to their position toward the Augustana and the Lutheran Symbols. He traced the organization of the Synodical Conference, the United Lutheran Church in America, and the American Lutheran Conference, and showed that all Lutheran bodies in the U. S. A. accept the Augsburg Confession as the norm for Lutheran doctrine and the other Confessions as witnesses to this truth. The influence of the Augsburg Confession in the American Lutheran churches can be traced in the organization of the congregations and in the various activities, both missionary and eleemosynary. The isolated position into which the Lutheran Church had been placed because of the foreign languages has now been removed, and the confessional position of Lutheranism is today playing a rather significant part in American denominationalism, which, generally speaking, envies the clear-cut confessional position which the Lutheran Church maintains. The Lutheran Church has without a doubt a great responsibility and a great opportunity in the American church life, due in large part to its unwavering adherence to its Confessions, particularly the Augustana.

The co-essayist during the first conference on this topic was Dr. Werner Elert, author of *Die Morphologie des Luthertums*, *Der christliche Glaube*, and *Der Kampf um das Christentum seit Schleiermacher und Hegel*. The Erlangen theologian showed that while in the United States the Augsburg Confession is exclusively a *theological* document, in Germany it has also been a political document almost since its beginning, and particularly since the Peace of Augsburg, 1555. Thus there is an entirely different attitude toward the Augsburg Confession among the Lutherans on the two continents. Political expediency compelled the Lutheran princes at Augsburg to set forth in their Confession that they had not deflected from the original Church, for Church and State were viewed as indivisible. Dr. Elert traced the developments in German history leading to the formation of the European State Church, of which the Augsburg Confession became an indispensable instrument. In America, on the other hand, Church and State are separated, and a confession of faith remains a purely theological document. As a result German and American

Lutheran theologians will approach the study of the Augustana from different backgrounds and with different interests.

Dr. Elert maintained furthermore that the recent Luther studies, especially those of Karl Holl, have shown that Lutheran Confessions show a deviation from Luther. German Lutheran scholars therefore are interested more in the study of Luther than of the Confessions. In a meeting of Lutherans from two continents the common ground must first be established. For the American Lutherans the common ground is the Lutheran Confessions; for the German Lutherans the person and writings of Luther; for the Scandinavian Lutherans the ecumenical movement. In the final analysis, however, the common basis must be the Scriptures, and not the Confessions.

In its approach to the Confessions present German Lutheranism is faced with the problem caused by the dialectical theology, which sees only relative value in confessions, a transitory statement for a specific occasion. According to dialectical theology the Church is "existential" only in "the moment of the event." The external Church is therefore only a mundane phenomenon of a "superhistorical" Church, and the *continuum* of the Church is not to be sought in confessions and outward organizations. The Church is only there where through the Holy Ghost's activity an "event takes place." A confession must be viewed as an "event." The Augustana was an "event" in 1530, but it is no longer *aktuell*, that is, vital and relevant today. The Barmen Declaration was *aktuell* in 1934, but is it still relevant in 1948? Professor Elert raised the question whether as a result of the influence of dialectical theology in Germany the Augsburg Confession is significant theologically or only historically.

In the second conference Dr. Asmussen served as the German essayist on this topic. He also stressed the political significance of the Augustana, but deplored that the confessional status was determined by the respective *Landeskirche* and not by the individual congregation. The theological significance of the Confessions had been undermined to a large degree by rationalism. Though liberalism has been progressively sloughed off, there has been no corresponding increase of the theological significance of the Augsburg Confession. This is due, no doubt, to a large degree to the sad fact that relatively few congregations know anything of the Augustana. Theologians today are discussing the question whether all current and relevant problems have been sufficiently explored by the Augsburg Confession.

In the third conference Prof. W. Schumann, formerly professor at Tuebingen, Halle, Giessen, and now at the *Christophorusstift* in Hemer, served as co-essayist on this topic. Like the other essayists,

Dr. Schumann showed that in Germany the Augsburg Confession has always been the instrument which had given the Church and the ministry legal status, and thus is viewed as the *legal* norm for doctrine in the Lutheran Church. This view fails to do justice to the real purpose and function of the Augsburg Confession. According to Professor Schumann there is an inner necessity for the Lutheran Confession, for *all* Lutheran Confessions. In the first place the congregation is constrained to praise God for His undeserved grace in Christ Jesus. The Confessions — and this is true particularly of the Formula of Concord — are doxologies, have the character of hymns. Furthermore, the congregation must bear witness to the truth. In the confession the congregation testifies that in obedience to the Word it will be a confessing church. Thus the congregation as it were confronts itself in the confession. Thirdly, the confession is the norm according to which the congregation manifests its fellowship and, conversely, rejects error. The confession therefore is the necessary instrument to unite, and even when it separates, its function is to establish a true and genuine union. And lastly, the confession binds the church of today with the generations that have preceded us. The essayist deplored the fact that the Augsburg Confession has so frequently been used as a political document. This is an anomaly, for the modern State is built on the principle of religious tolerance and therefore cannot confess a specific doctrine. In conclusion Dr. Schumann showed the untenableness of the Reformed charge that the Augsburg Confession in Article XVI paved the way for Prussian militarism and ultimately German totalitarianism. The fact is that the Prussian Union practically eliminated the Augsburg Confession and that in this militaristic Prussia not the Lutheran, but Reformed principles gained the upper hand.

Space permits us to list only the most important problems which presented themselves.

1. It became evident that the American theologians were compelled to re-orient themselves as to the German theologians' approach to the Augsburg Confession if they were to understand the tensions which come to the surface. Due to the complex situation in the German churches, some theologians are ready to view the Augustana in the light of the *Wittenberg Concord* of 1537 (which has been exploited by unionists) or in the light of the *Barmen Declaration* of 1934, and believe that the formation of the EKiD as a *church*, not only as a federation, is in the spirit of the Augustana.

2. There was wholehearted agreement that the Confessions have

value only *in actu*. that, however, where the Confession is a living thing, there it will also have significance *in statu*, that is, there can be no re-formulation and re-adaptation of the Confessions with the rise of every new antithesis. While some held that the Lutheran Confessions do not come to grips with modern heresies in their modern form, others pointed out that in the final analysis the principles for combating modern forms of old heresies are laid down in the Confessions. This applies to all forms of heresies in Europe and in America.

3. The Pietists' approach to the Confessions was presented in detail by several participants at the first conference. They said that the emphasis must be placed on the Scriptures and not on the Confessions, since the Confessions are apt to lead, and even have led, to a dead orthodoxy (*Erstarrung und Verengung*). The inner continuity with the Lord is best preserved if the various hues of the Reformation churches are properly emphasized, in other words, if the characteristics of Lutheranism, Zwinglianism, and Calvinism are permitted to stand side by side and fused into a harmonious whole. The overwhelming majority did not share this view.

4. It was generally agreed that Lutherans throughout the world accept the Augsburg Confession as *norma normata*. While the German Lutherans have in recent years stressed the study of Luther, the American Lutherans have also treasured Luther, as is evident in the monumental St. Louis edition of *Luther's Works*. Nowhere do Lutherans elevate the Confessions to a *norma normans*.

5. Questions which require further study are the following: What is meant by a *quia* subscription? Are we ready to subscribe to the Lutheran rule that Scripture is *norma normans* and the Confession *norma normata*? — Must we demand of all Lutherans an unqualified subscription not only to the Augsburg Confession, but also the Formula of Concord? — Must the Lutherans of Germany accept the damnatory clauses of the Confessions, especially CA X, in view of the modern theological situation?

The Material Principle of Lutheran Theology

It is self-evident that in a *Begegnung* of Lutheran theologians the *terminus a quo* and *ad quem* is the *articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae*, the doctrine of justification. Dr. Paul Bretscher had been selected to speak for the American theologians on this central doctrine. On the basis of Scripture and with many references to the Lutheran Confessions and to the literature of the Missouri Synod the essayist

set forth that the doctrine of justification is the material principle of Lutheran theology and as such permeates all other doctrines of the Scriptures, especially the person of Christ, redemption, the means of grace, absolution, the Church, sanctification, predestination. The essence of justification was clearly set forth, particularly the forensic character of justification, the universality of justification, objective and subjective justification, the sufficiency of Christ's work, the place of faith. In conclusion Dr. Bretscher showed that there is always an indissoluble connection between justification and its fruits, such as assurance of salvation, the indwelling of the Triune God in the believers.

Dr. Ernst Gerstenmaier of the Friedberg Seminary served as co-essayist in the first conference, and because of unforeseen complications also at the second meeting. He presented the Biblical concept of righteousness on the basis of the relevant terms in the Old and the New Testaments, setting forth that in the Old Testament the term righteousness denotes not only God's judicial, but primarily His saving activity. The essayist maintained that in the New Testament righteousness denotes man's justice (*Rechtschaffenheit*) before God, a "justice" *per fidem*, not *propter fidem*, and refuted a commonly current interpretation of Luke 18:13-14, namely, that the publican acknowledged God's judgment and thus became justified, in short, a justification on account of faith. This position was held to be untenable in the light of Paul, who completely de-evaluates man's own righteousness in his encounter with Christ. The essayist distinguished between the *paresis* (Rom. 3:25) prior to the sinner's encounter with Christ and the *aphesis*, which occurs after the encounter. God has set forth Christ to be the propitiation, and thus God is reconciled. God is therefore always the subject, never the object, of justification. Justification is always a forensic act, never a moral or spiritual renovation. Through faith man makes the objective redemptive activity his own, and at the same time he enters into the right relation to God's redemptive activity. The punctiliar action of redemption becomes a continuing presence. In short, I become just, when God creates faith. The eternal power and truth are the guarantee which validate God's promise of my justification.

In the third conference Pfarrer Hopf, leader of the *Schwabacher Konvent*, served as the German co-essayist. He pointed out that justification is the key to the entire Scriptures, and, applying this basic thought to the current German situation, he maintained that all union efforts which detract in the least from CA IV are a futile, yes, a diabolic undertaking. This article is not a theological theory,

but the center of our entire proclamation, with which alone we can comfort disturbed consciences. The essayist dwelt especially on the close relation of this article with all other doctrines touched upon in our Confessions. It was his main interest to show that there is a fundamental divergence between Lutheran and Reformed theology also in this central doctrine, in spite of the oft-repeated claim that also for Calvin the doctrine of justification occupies a central position.

The subsequent discussions both in the group meetings and in the plenary session brought to light a deep and fundamental agreement on the central doctrine of Lutheran theology. Nevertheless a number of important points were raised which are of significance not only for German, but for American Christians.

1. After the frightful experiences of the war there is relatively little fear of death in Europe today. In spite of the emphasis on the guilt question, there is, however, no genuine consciousness of guilt. The modern secularized man of Europe had glibly spoken of "*der gute Gott*" or "*der liebe Gott*," and now finds that such a god was a figment of the mind. How can German pastors preach the doctrine of justification to their *Volkskirchen* under such conditions? They must begin with a restudy of God's true essence, with the basic dogmatical truth that in God essence and attributes are the same, more specifically, that God is not only love, but also holiness. Law and Gospel must be proclaimed in their proper distinction. The right preaching of the Law will bring people to confess: "Against Thee," not against my neighbor, "have I sinned." And such preaching will lay the foundation for full Gospel preaching and a deep appreciation of justification by faith through grace in Christ.

2. Is there a danger that Luther's hamatologico-centric theology may crowd out the Christocentric theology of Paul? The fact is that both stress sin and Christ.

3. The proper distinction between justification (as taking place in the heart of God), conversion (God's act in the heart of man), and sanctification (as the fruit) must be stressed, because the Reformed, particularly the Barthians, have unjustly charged Lutheranism with Quietism and because Lutherans are in danger in the interest of pietistic principles to confuse the three points.

4. The German theologians are under the impact of an "encounter," an "event" theology. This was reflected in the overemphasis of subjective justification. The doctrine of objective justification apparently received little attention. The following questions were raised but could not be fully answered in the face of more im-

mediate questions: Is justification universal (objective) or only potential, inasmuch as faith is necessary to make it actual? Does the "incorporation into Christ" in Baptism make the "potential justification" a reality? Is not the objective justification *fait accompli* prior to and independent of our faith? In fact, is not the Gospel nothing more nor less than the proclamation of the universal justification?

5. Answering the question whether there are not "positive values" that inure to the Christian through the act of justification. Professor Graebner submitted the following:

Categories Illustrating the Relation of Sin and Grace

Sin Viewed as:	The Divine Act of Grace	An Abiding Possession
1. Guilt	Forgiveness	Innocence
2. Disobedience	The restoration of the Prodigal Son	Adoption of sons
3. An Accusation	Absolution: Sentence of justification	Freedom (Galatians)
4. Contamination	A cleansing	The garment of holiness (Isaiah 1)
5. Discord	Reconciliation	Union (Ephesians)
6. Being lost	The finding	One fold and one shepherd
7. Death	Dying with Christ, Romans 6	The new life

6. In answer to the pietistic emphasis on experience it was stressed that the assurance of justification must always rest upon the promise of God and never on a religious experience. Faith must stand without experience, yes, even contrary to experience. Even in case of a frightful neurosis, the assurance is not based on one's feelings or lack of feeling, but solely upon faith in God's Gospel.

The Formal Principle of Lutheran Theology

Article V teaches that God has instituted "the ministry of teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments" to attain justifying faith. In developing this article the American essayist, Prof. F. E. Mayer, pointed out that this formulation was directed against all Romanizing tendencies and all forms of enthusiasm. In contrast to the former, which ascribe spiritual powers to natural man, Lutheran theology emphasizes divine monergism in conversion. In contrast to the latter, which teach the immediacy of the Holy Spirit, Lutheran theology stresses the necessity of means: the Gospel and the Sacraments. The Gospel comes to us in the Scriptures (the written Word), in the office of the ministry (the spoken Word, for example, the sermon, absolution, brotherly admonition), and in the Sacraments (as the visible Word). Since the dialectical theology con-

finds the Law and the Gospel, it is essential to stress the fact that the Law is in no wise a means of grace. The Law cannot engender faith, because faith is trust, must have as its correlative the Gospel promises of God's grace. A trust in God's majesty, including His holy wrath, is not faith, but at best only "a dare" (*ein Wagnis*), but a foolhardy and fatal dare.

The Gospel, whether written, spoken, or visible, is efficacious, for as our Prophet Christ offers God's grace in and through the Gospel; and the Holy Spirit is always in the Word with His divine presence.

Prof. Dr. H. Thielicke of Tuebingen served as co-essayist during the first conference. He confined his discussion to the topic "The Law and the Gospel in Barthian Theology." "If," said Dr. Thielicke, "the Law must be viewed as Gospel, on the basis of the axiom: Thou canst, because thou must, then Barth reduces the Gospel merely to an 'enabling factor,' and this will lead to *securitas*. If, however, Barth changes the Gospel into a new law, then he will create uncertainty, for the Christian can only say, I am at best a good servant, but not a child."

The proper distinction between the Law and Gospel implies also the right distinction between God's attributes of holiness and love. Unless God's judgment and His grace are properly distinguished, God becomes "*Der liebe, der gute Gott*." Evil is then viewed only as a step in an evolutionary process toward the ultimate good, in other words, to the ^{revelation of God} *apokatastasis pantoon*. Humanly speaking, God's holiness and love present a tension in God and therefore also a tension for faith. But is it not a characteristic of faith to believe contrary to something? The dialectical theology, based on the axiom *Finitum non est capax infiniti*, is therefore essentially a theology of tension. It claims that the paradox, the tension between God and man is such that every revelation of God, even in His judgments and condemnation, is a condescension on God's part, is God's grace, is the Gospel. The very fact that God speaks to man is grace, and therefore Barth views the Law as the best expression (*ausgepraegte Form*) of the Gospel. Thus he mingles the Law and Gospel and thereby he actually resolves the tensions which allegedly are the core and essence of his theology.

A mingling of Law and Gospel becomes evident in Barth's eschatology. Since according to Barth Christ's work does not consist in the redemption from the Law, the Gospel is merely the continuation of the Law; the Kingdom has not come, but is near; faith is only the hope for the future. Christmas is merely "a Sunday in Advent

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with five candles," and the incarnate Son of God has become a docetist phantasm.

In conclusion, the essayist showed that Barth follows Calvin. The two are agreed that Law and Gospel represent *one* covenant in two forms: the Gospel being merely a complement to the Law. There is at best only a quantitative difference between the two. In Lutheran theology, however, there is an irreconcilable, conflict, a qualitative difference. In Calvinism and Barthianism, Law and Gospel are two concentric circles. In Lutheran theology man must be taken out of the circle of the Law and placed into the circle of the Gospel.

In the second conference Dr. Herbert Krimm, formerly professor at Leipzig and now with *Das Evangelische Hilfswerk* at Stuttgart, served as co-essayist. Dr. Krimm did not discuss the means of grace *per se*, but the ministry *in concreto*. In very beautiful language and with much feeling he made some telling statements on the evangelical minister's proper evaluation of his ministry. Current ecclesiastical thinking in Germany raises significant problems: Who is the author of our office, Christ? the Church? or both? Pastors must realize that the essence and function of the ministry is to serve both as the mouthpiece of Christ and the messenger for the Church. What is the relation of the oral proclamation to the Sacraments? Do the German pastors of some sections place too much emphasis on the oral proclamation and ignore the Sacraments? The two must remain in perfect balance, otherwise we will have a waterhead on a shriveled body. Dr. Krimm advocated a revision of the ministerial curriculum, so that future pastors are prepared for the threefold functions of their office: the pastor as preacher, i. e., as exegete, exhorter, and comforter; the pastor as the custodian of the Sacraments; and the pastor as father confessor.

In the third conference Prof. Dr. Adolf Koeberle of Tuebingen served as co-essayist. Dr. Koeberle is well known in American Lutheran circles through the publication of his excellent study *Rechtfertigung und Heiligung* under the English title *Quest for Holiness*.

God has instituted the office of the ministry to engender saving faith, described in CA IV. The Lutheran Church stresses the "*simul iustus et peccator*"; though justified, the believer has not attained perfection, and yet there is a growth in faith. But this always presupposes that the question of guilt has been solved. There can be no sanctification unless it rests on the foundation of justification.

It is the purpose of the ministerial office to transmit the proclamation of the Word from generation to generation. The importance

of this function we recognize in our day. One blames the other for the complete demoralization of the postwar world, and each refuses to forgive, yes, lacks the capacity to forgive. If we know, however, that God for Jesus' sake has forgiven us, then we can also forgive our fellow men. A reconciliation which has been experienced makes it possible for one to be conciliatory. We members of the clergy must take this to heart in our relationships to one another as well as in our relationships to members of our congregations.

God has ordained that this faith be created through the office of the ministry. "*Deus nemini dat interna nisi externa*" (Word, Sacraments, Church). The Anabaptists of the sixteenth century endeavored to use Word and Sacrament as a springboard for their *saltus mortalitatis* into a spiritual ecstasy and a visionary interpretation. In their spiritual arrogance they claimed to have spoken with angels and archangels. Luther: "*visiones habere nolo*," for in these higher regions he might meet not only Gabriel, but also Lucifer. We cannot enter into the vestibule of God's holiness without means. Therefore God must become poor and small; condescend to us; become an infant, our brother, and pass through sorrow and death. When I think of God, everything becomes confusing to me; but when I think of Christ, then I have a solid foundation under me.

Expanding on the doctrine of inspiration, Dr. Koeberle said that three factors must be kept in mind: 1) *Theopneustie* implies people whom God has controlled and whom He has directed to proclaim His will. 2) We must bear in mind the unity, interrelationships and close connection of the sacred writings. The sacred Scriptures are not a haphazard collection of unrelated books. The same God speaks in the Old and in the New Testament (Heb. 1:1). 3) Not only the *res*, but also the *verba* are divinely inspired. The *res* are said with unique power and beauty, and in the *verba* God's Spirit is present. Who is there who would be able to retell the story of the Passion more forcibly and more beautifully than the sacred writers have told this story? The great treasures are given us in earthen vessels. Scripture is, as it were, a "powerful electrical force" employed by God through which God's will is communicated to us. But this electrical force runs along wires which here and there have suffered damage. Liberal criticism notes only the damaged parts, and pays no attention to the electrical stream itself. Orthodox theologians note only the electrical current, and sometimes even regard Scripture as the Mohammedans regard their Koran (given directly by angels). We must guard both against liberalism and against literalism. We do not wish to become unfaithful to God's Word. On the other hand,

we must know how God deals with man in other ways. This will lead to the conclusion that our theology is a *theologia crucis*. And of the lowly Bible we will say: *Omnia humana, omnia divina*.

We require *media salutis*, for in them alone—not in ourselves—do we find the solution to the problem of guilt. These media are Word and Sacrament. It has been said: "Protestantism is the Church of the Word, and Catholicism is the Church of the Sacrament." The Lutheran Church, however, has always been the Church of both, Word and Sacrament. Each has its specific characteristics. The Word, *verbum audibile*, proclaims *megaleia tou theou*. Mysticism claims to have the Word, but it rejects the written documentation of the Word. It is impossible to learn historical events by a silent, Quakerlike longing (*durch wortloses Schmachten*). God's great deeds can be communicated to us only through the Word. An answer on the part of man can follow only when and where God has spoken (cp. Wort and its correlate, *Verantwortung*).

Many people, indeed, listen to the Word, but they do not honor the Sacraments (*verbum visibile*). In the Sacraments the fullness of God's grace is communicated to man in an immediate personal way. We have under the pulpit not only the Pharisee, but also the hypochondriacs who believe that their sins are too great. In the Sacraments we can taste how lovingly kind the Lord is.

These means of grace seem unimpressive. Men are impressed by a procession of tanks and the march of battalions. But God dispenses completely with pomp and circumstance. He lays aside His majesty (*kenosis*). The manger and the Cross are God's way of indicating His power. The Church, therefore, remains an *ecclesia crucis*. And so it happens that the Church can be overlooked, just as Herod and Pilate overlooked it, because the Church does not operate with political triumphs, but employs Word and Sacrament, unimpressive means. Even the transmission of the sacred text is an aspect of the lowliness of the Word. God does not win hearts by His irresistible power. Force only repels, and begets hate. God offers and invites and thus creates confidence, 2 Cor. 5:20.

In this connection four problems arose.

1. Does the Missouri Synod in its dogmatical presentation make the doctrine of the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures the major premise and, as it were, the starting point for all theological discussion? In other words, Does the Missouri Synod accept the Scriptures as God's Word because the "it is written" commits the theologian to a mechanical inspiration theory as the *a priori* of all dogmatics, or does Missouri accept the Bible as God's Word according

to Luther's famous dictum "*Was Christum treibet*"? The question was further asked whether verbal inspiration will not lead to an intellectual and legalistic apprehension of the Bible. Apparently the term verbal inspiration has consistently been understood to imply the Calvinistic dictation theory. Three points were urged to explain our use of the term "verbal inspiration." a. We reject every mechanical interpretation of the process of inspiration. Paul, e. g., writes to the Philippians out of the urge which we all feel when we think of our friends in the distance. b. The term "verbal inspiration" is not to be understood as an attempt to explain the manner of inspiration, but to emphasize the mystery of inspiration. c. The doctrine of verbal inspiration is not the basis of our systematic theology and is not the major premise of Christian assurance. There are persons who are assured of their adoption of sons without ever having heard of verbal inspiration. It is possible to believe in the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures and yet promulgate gross doctrinal error (example of the Roman Church and of the Millennialists). It is possible to deny the verbal inspiration of the Holy Writ and yet not only confess the evangelical doctrine but testify it to the salvation of many. The doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture does not stand in the relationship of *a priori*, but of *a posteriori* to our theology. It is not the broad basis upon which the pyramid of dogmatics is built up. It is not the regulative dogma in our system; we have no "regulative" doctrines like the sovereign will of God in the Reformed system. Our dogmatics is not a tree growing out of certain broad principles, but a forest of trees which is growing out of the relevant texts. Our highest principle is the clarity of Scripture. Like the German theologians, we operate with dictionary, grammar, historical research, sound dialectics, textual criticism, ever assured that God has spoken through the Scriptures in a manner so as to be understood. The question ever before the mind of the Bible student is: What does God wish to say to us here? We do, however, assert that whatever it is that God has said is true, authoritative, final, and decisive. We are concerned in upholding complete inerrancy and absolute authority of the Holy Scriptures.

Does the teaching of the Missouri Synod on verbal inspiration take sufficient cognizance of the so-called *human* side of the Scriptures? Or is there not danger that this doctrine will lead to a Docetist view of the Scriptures and eliminate the human element entirely? The question really was: Can we maintain the inerrancy of Scripture in such areas as natural science, history? What about the imprecatory Psalms? Is there not danger that the Christological interest may be

buried under elements which belong to a world view untenable in the light of modern research? The incarnation of Christ was used as an analogy of the Scriptures, for as Christ *ensarkos* subjected Himself to the limitations of humanity, so likewise the authors of the Bible in many areas were subject to the limitations of their Semitic and Hellenistic culture. And they did not presume to speak inerrantly on points of history and culture. Can we not say that Scripture participates in the condescendence of God both as to its text and the content? Does God not come to us in the "swaddling clothes" of human limitations, and does He not adapt Himself to our *Weltbild*? The Americans answered that the analogy of Christ's incarnation, if taken seriously, would demonstrate the inerrancy of the Bible, for though Christ's knowledge was limited in the state of humiliation, He was not subject to error.

The German theologians recognized our deep concern to maintain the inerrancy and sole authority of the Scriptures in our conflict with the subjectivism of Liberal Theology. They viewed sympathetically and appreciated the reasons why in our dogmatics the *locus de Scriptura* has been embodied in the Prolegomena. Not Aristotelian scholasticism, but zeal for maintaining the inerrancy and prime relevance of the Holy Scriptures prompted our dogmaticians to preface dogmatics with an extensive treatment on *Sacra Scriptura*. German Lutheran theology was confronted by other antitheses, particularly the Calvinistic "dictation theory," textual criticism, and the natural sciences. Therefore the insistence on the part of German theologians that the approach to the Bible must be primarily Christocentric and only secondarily from the viewpoint of its inerrancy. One German theologian summarized the view: "*An die Stelle einer mit der Verbalinspiration sich ergebenden flächigen Anschauung der Schrift sollte eine auf Christus bezogene treten.*" In the practical ministry, especially in evangelistic work, this is the approach which the Lutheran pastor follows. For that reason the question was discussed whether it would not be better to treat the doctrine *de Scriptura* either under the prophetic office of Christ or under the means of grace. It became quite apparent that the points of divergence were due partly to semantic problems and partly to a different background with divergent antitheses. No one denied the sole authority of Scriptures in all matters of faith and life.

2. The relation of the written, the spoken, and the visible Word was discussed in all three sessions. Some German theologians questioned the validity of such a distinction theoretically, but all were agreed that it was of practical value. While the American theologians

maintained that there is no *essential* difference between the three forms of the Word, some German theologians held that the spoken Word is of greater significance as means of grace than the written Word. They based their views on Paul's use of *kerygma* and advanced the proposition that the Word is God's Word in the moment of its proclamation (*Verkuendigung*). They said that Luther and the Confessions consider "*das geschriene Wort*," the "preached Word," as the real means of grace. CA V does not speak of the Scriptures at all, but only of the office of proclamation. It was pointed out, however, that Luther's emphasis on the "preached Word" was necessary because of the antithesis to Rome's *ex opere operato* theory. All were agreed that the Holy Spirit "will draw no one except through means" and that ordinarily the Holy Spirit uses the spoken Word (sermon, absolution, brotherly admonition) as the means of grace. The relation of the sermon to the written Word was briefly discussed, and instances were mentioned where the Holy Spirit created faith through the written Word. After all, the Holy Spirit works faith "where and when" He wills, through the written, spoken, or visible word.

3. Because the Lord's Supper had fallen into such disuse among the Germans, there is a tendency at the present time to overstress the value and efficacy of the Lord's Supper. As a result the liturgical movement has gained a relatively large following. It was therefore necessary to stress that the Holy Spirit uses the Word in its three forms as His means of grace. Some elevate the efficacy of the "sacramental" Word above the "preached Word." This gave rise to such questions: What is the relation of Baptism and the Lord's Supper to each other in the Christian life? How can Word and Sacrament become a live issue in the congregation? Why does the Sacrament not occupy the central position in the church service? Is the reason perhaps that the minister himself does not fully appreciate the significance of the Sacrament?

4. Considerable time was devoted to the distinction between Law and Gospel. Is the First Commandment Law or Gospel? How must the Law be preached? Is the Law also a means of grace since it is called *paidagogos*? The attention was directed to Article V of the Formula of Concord, where the Law is defined as everything in the Old or the New Testament which reveals the wrath of God, including even the Passion history. The proper distinction between Law and Gospel is one of the burning theological questions in Europe today. Walther's *Law and Gospel* has been of no little assistance in helping to solve this question.

The Doctrine of the Church

Two days of each conference were devoted to the discussion of the doctrine of the Church, the first day to CA VII and the second to CA VIII and XXVIII. Prof. F. E. Mayer served as the American essayist in presenting the subject matter of CA VII. The German co-essayists were Dr. Edmund Schlink (formerly at Bethel Seminary, Bielefeld, now at Heidelberg, author of *Theologie der Lutherischen Bekenntnisschriften*), Pfarrer Lic. Dr. Geppert (a doctorate from Jena, six years service in the army, and now pastor at Bittenhausen), and Kirchenrat Kinder of the Bavarian *Landeskirche*. Dr. Theo. Graebner led the discussions on the Church and the Ministry. Dr. Geo. Merz served as co-essayist in the first and the second conference, and Rektor Kirsten in the final conference. Dr. Merz was formerly at Bethel Seminary and is now rector of the Augustana Kollegium at Neuendettelsau. He is co-editor of the revised and emended two-volume work by Th. Harnack, *Luthers Theologie*. Rektor Kirsten is professor at the Free Church Seminary, Oberursel. The two topics, *De Ecclesia*, CA VII, and *Quid Sit Ecclesia?* CA VIII, are so closely related that some overlapping in the discussions was unavoidable.

The American essayist examined the content of CA VII on the basis of New Testament terms for the Church. The term *ecclesia* denotes the Church as the communion of saints, that is, of people who are holy through faith and love. Because of its essence the holy Christian Church is "invisible" inasmuch as it is perceptible only to faith. The *ecclesia* comprises only, but all, the sanctified as they may be gathered at one place or scattered throughout the world. The term *basileia* denotes the gracious kingship of Christ, which is soteriological, not primarily eschatological or even sociological. The *basileia* is the gracious activity which has freed us from our spiritual tyrants and transferred us into the kingship of Christ. Thus this term presents the Church under the aspect of God's activity. Since Christ exercises His royal activity in the Church exclusively through the means of grace, they are the unmistakable marks of the *ecclesia* or the *basileia*. The term *soma tou Christou* directs our attention to the unity of the Christian Church. The constituent element of this unity is faith which always embraces the entire Christ and unites each Christian with Christ and with all other believers (*fides qua creditur*). The unity will manifest itself in the faith based on the pure Gospel (which may vary quantitatively) and the right administration of the Sacraments (*fides quae creditur*). The comforting fact that the holy

Christian Church will endure until the end of time is brought out in the New Testament concept *oikodomee*. By Word and Sacrament the Church is constantly in the process of building until it will reach its consummation in the final glorification of all believers.

Dr. Schlink interpreted CA VII in modern terminology and defined the essence of the Church as "the event (*Ereignis*) in the fellowship of faith." The Gospel is the constituent factor of the Church, and paradoxically the Church also possesses and proclaims the Gospel. The Holy Spirit not only calls us *into* the Church, but also *by* the Church, so that Luther can rightly speak of the Church as our mother. The *congregatio sanctorum* is effected by faith and effects faith, and again, it is the gathering of believers prior to the individual's faith. This is true of the *congregatio* whether at a specific locality or universally, for the *congregatio* is always the *una sancta*.

The *una sancta* is visible to faith on the basis of its marks, namely, the liberating Gospel, the only means whereby the Holy Spirit is given and whereby He calls within the Church. The Confessions may be viewed as marks of the Church in a secondary sense, inasmuch as they define the Word and the Sacrament and determine the proclamation in the Church. However, the mere subscription to the Confessions, the mere possession of the Confessions (the confessions *in statu*), is not a mark of the Church. Only in the act of confessing (*in actu*) do the Confessions become a testimony. The same applies to the Word, which is a mark of the Church only inasmuch as it is spirit and life and "leads to an event."

The Augsburg Confession presupposes that the Holy Scriptures are the *norma normans*. It does not discuss the question why the Scriptures are the only norm of doctrine, but merely states that the sum of the Scriptures is the Gospel. In modern terminology we might say that in the encounter (*Begegnung*) of the Gospel with the Scriptures the Gospel becomes the norm of Scripture, and Scripture the norm of the Gospel.

In conclusion, the essayist referred to the immediate problem of stating clearly our position toward other confessional groups and particularly toward the ecumenical movement. Of course, the ecumenical movement cannot be identified with the *una sancta*, since it does not have a common Scriptural canon, the Greek Orthodox, for example, accepting also the Apocryphal Books, and the Lutherans and Reformed manifesting different opinions on the Scriptural canon. Nor does the ecumenical movement have a common confession on

such essential doctrines as justification and the Sacraments, in fact, not even the Lutherans are agreed on the extent of the Confessions. Two dangers confront the Church: 1) Unionism which advocates an *Ein-Topf-Kirche*, a danger of which the American Lutherans are especially conscious; 2) Isolationism, of which the German theologians are particularly conscious. The great problem confronting the Church is: How can we chart a straight course between these two disastrous shoals?

Dr. Geppert approached the topic of CA VII from the twofold view that the invisible Church is perceptible only through faith and that the right teaching is the essential mark of the Church. His chief interest was to set forth that agreement in doctrine is a necessary "order," using the word as an antonym of chaos. The *satis est* must become a "*necesse est*." Order requires *consentire de doctrina*, and this in turn demands *recte docetur*. Doctrinal liberty leads to chaos. But order *per se* is not enough, it must become an event. This occurs when Scripture is accepted as God's Word, when the Sacraments are rightly administered, when the doctrine is rightly taught, and when the ministry is instituted. Where this order is changed, chaos results. The Prussian Union, the largest Protestant Church of the eighteenth century, ended in chaos, for it had no *consensus*. Its rationalism finally led to unionism, and such chaotic conditions existed that two preachers could serve the same congregation though they were as far apart as Luther and Loyola. The modern theory that the confession is the problem of the individual, also leads to chaos. The Church must, therefore, be bound by a confession.

The goal which Kirchenrat Kinder had set for himself in discussing CA VII was to present the tensions between *ecclesia* and *basileia*, the visible and the invisible church, office and congregation, transcendent continuity and the constantly repeating event. He found a polarity between *basileia* as the activity of God and the *ecclesia* as the congregation. As the term *basileia* describes the Church in its relation to the activity of God and "our mother," so the term *ecclesia* denotes the continued activity of the Holy Spirit: the lengthened arm of the activity of Christ as it is manifested in His threefold office. In this sense the Church may be spoken of as *soma*, not a mystic, but an active body. The human side of the Church is brought out best in the term "congregation." While God works, He does so through men. The term *congregatio*, of course, is intimately related with the word *grex* and directs our attention to the correlative of the flock, the shepherd who gathers the flock.

The essayist raised the question whether all statements concern-

ing the *ecclesia* can be ascribed to the local congregation. He maintained the distinction between the priesthood of all believers and the public ministry. In German Lutheranism there is the problem concerning the authority to confer the public ministry, whether the entire *ecclesia*, or the individual congregation, or an individual person.

Dr. Graebner introduced the topic *Quid sit ecclesia?* by showing that Luther's concept of the local congregation is in full harmony with his central theological thought, the doctrine of justification. The Gospel always results in a division of mankind into two classes: Christian and non-Christian, and also in the visible Christian communion there is a smaller circle which, properly speaking, alone deserves the name Church of Christ. This fellowship is a fellowship of persons.

There is an intimate union between the concept of the Gospel and the doctrine of the Office of the Keys, which is not an authority to rule, but the possession and administration of all spiritual gifts. Luther early understood that the local congregation possessed these spiritual gifts and after the Leipzig colloquy came to a clear understanding of the universal priesthood. This insight led him to teach that the Church is not a group of minors, but a community of people who have gained the full majority and the competence to judge. Conversely, the priests are only servants and ministers of the congregation which has called them.

Also locally, there is only one Church, not two, the visible and the invisible. It is invisible in so far that the members constituting the *una sancta* locally cannot be recognized. On the other hand, the local congregation has forms and marks whereby even the unbelievers can recognize its existence. The office of the ministry is not a third constituent factor independent of the Church. The divine institution of the congregation is God's will and ordinance. Scripture teaches that Christians must be gathered together in Christian congregations and establish the office of the ministry in their midst, that its members must exercise Christian discipline, and that they must jointly celebrate the Lord's Supper.

The Church of Christ in its proper sense exists within the congregation, and ordinarily is to be found only there, although it is possible for the Christian Church to be found also outside the local fellowship. All the attributes ascribed to the *una sancta* must likewise be ascribed to the local congregation. The local congregations must not be viewed as parts of the *una sancta*, but rather as representing the *una sancta* in each specific locality. In the local congregation we find justifying faith, the source of Christian life, and the

proper relation to Christ; we find the community of saints, who are clothed not only in Christ's righteousness, but who show their holiness also in their pious life. Only within the local congregation in its testimony and confession, in its ministry, and in its literature, does the saving doctrine become active on earth.

The priesthood of all believers manifests itself in the local congregation, for to it are ascribed all rights and privileges given to the *una sancta*. The local congregation has the Sacraments, the office of the ministry, the authority to establish auxiliary or representative offices, such as the synodical president, bishop, dean.

In developing Articles VIII and XXVIII, Dr. Merz first discussed the purpose of the Apostolic Succession, more specifically the question: Do bishops have authority to enact laws? Rome answers affirmatively, since they claim that Christ sent the Apostles and gave them authority. But in sending the Apostles, Christ did not rescind His promise to stay with His Church forever. The Apostles are merely Christ's representatives, and their word is Christ's Word. This Word is not only the object, but also the bearer of the office. The pastors in the New Testament are always viewed as administrators, never as usurpers. They have no liberty of their own, but are bound. This bondage is the difference between an apostle and a genius. As apostles they dare not transgress the boundary set for them. In the Lutheran doctrine of the Church the emphasis lies upon the congregation, which is always viewed as a coming together. The Bavarians still say, "Mir gaenga zur G'ma" (we go to the congregation, i. e., voters' meeting). This is, no doubt, the reason why Luther derived the word *Kirche* from *kyria*, and not from *curia*. The latter term would suggest that the Church's existence is derived from the authority of the ruling bishops, while the term *kyria* suggests the supremacy of the Church.

The Church is a congregation of saints. But Pietism asks: Who are the *sancti*? Which factor unites them as a sovereign *congregatio*?

The Lutherans protested the *potestas cathedrae*, that is, the canonists, and the Pietists objected to the *potestas principii*, that is, the consistories and church governments. But the saints have not come together of themselves to escape some *potestas*, but they have been gathered together through Word and Sacrament. Thus the Word is the central thought in "congregation," *per verbum congregantur*. The dominant concept is *verbum*, not *congregatio*. In Pietism, however, the fellowship and the "warmth" of the fellowship experience has been made the essential element of the Church. In doing so,

Pietism has dammed the stream and enjoys happy days at an artificial lake. But the Church is only where the stream is flowing, where Word and Sacrament are present.

The question of the efficacy of the written Word in relation to the spoken Word is really not relevant. The point is rather: What is the relation of Word and proclamation? The Confession states that the Church is the Church only in so far as the pure doctrine is correctly *taught*. This indicates that the emphasis must not lie on the written, but on the oral Word. Is there not a humanistic trend in the St. Louis theology when the written and the spoken Word are equated? The Word must approach us as a promise, as a vital Word. This is done in the spoken Word, for as Loehe said: The ministry does not belong to the *ordo salutis*, but lies at the threshold. Church and ministry are therefore correlatives.

Rektor Kirsten stressed particularly the *recte docetur* and *recte administrantur* of CA VII as the mark of the Church. In view of the fact that the organizational meeting of the EKID had adjourned only a few days previously, it was only natural that a representative of the Lutheran Free Churches would speak with mingled feelings. On the one hand he expressed his deep joy over the *magnus consensus* in the doctrine of justification which was so clearly evident at the Bad Boll meetings. On the other hand he felt constrained to express his deep sorrow that in spite of serious tensions between the various confessions the EKID had been formed without removing these and that it was virtually agreed to disagree. Can the Lutheran *Landeskirchen* ignore the *consentire de doctrina* of CA VII?

It was indeed significant that theologians from two continents, with their divergent historical background and their totally different concepts of church governments, found so many points of agreement in this important doctrine. Throughout the discussions it became apparent that the doctrine of justification was the *terminus a quo* from which the essence of the Church must be viewed. So long as theologians are agreed on this central doctrine and are able properly to distinguish between Law and Gospel, they will also be able to agree on the essence and the marks of the Church. We shall first list the problems which were discussed in connection with CA VII, although some do not properly belong under CA VII.

1. Is the Church an event, *ein Ereignis*? At various points of the theological discussion the concept of *Ereignis* played a prominent part. No doubt, the experiences of the past fifteen years and the impact of the Barthian theology are reflected in the frequent use of this concept. The Americans had some difficulty to get the full sig-

nificance of this term immediately, and for that reason the theologians from the two continents may have talked past each other at times. While some may use this term in its existential-philosophical connotation, the majority used the term to denote that something must happen if the Church may really claim to be the Church. Since some of the so-called "confessional churches" in the opinion of many failed to measure up to their responsibility in the Hitler crisis, the younger theologians in particular are anxious to have the churches go beyond the point where they merely possess the Word. The Word must become an event, that is, the Church must state the truth as well as refute the heresies *in actu*. When the Church becomes a confessing Church (*bekennende Kirche*), then an *Ereignis* has occurred, and the confession is valid *in actu*. Of course, the confession has validity not only in the act of confessing, but becomes the standard of the Church, and is therefore valid also *in statu*.

2. The question was raised in each session whether the Church lives only, or at least primarily, through the spoken Word. Some held that the ministry of the printed Word is of little, at least of very secondary, importance. Others, however, emphasized that the Church is a *continuum*. Such a continuity cannot be maintained through the spoken Word. The written Word is essential. It is evident that a discussion of the relation of the prophetic office of Christ to His revelation in the written Word and in the spoken Word (sermon, absolution) requires further study. True, according to our experience the Holy Spirit usually employs the *viva vox* of men to create faith, but He also employs the written Word. The spoken Word in the sermon, Luther's *das geschriene Wort*, is nothing else than the written Word.

3. What is the basis for fellowship in view of the current ecumenical movement? in view of the organization of EKiD? of the World Council of Churches? Is *consensus* in the Christocentric dogma sufficient? Some appealed to the *satis est* of CA VII in establishing a basis for fellowship. It was, however, pointed out that CA VII speaks of the *una sancta* and not of outward fellowship.

4. Does the holy Christian Church possess essentially everything now which the believers will enjoy in heaven? Or must we make a qualitative difference between the so-called Church Militant and the Church Triumphant? Is the *basileia* primarily eschatological rather than soteriological?

5. Luther speaks of seven marks of the Church. Are there more than two *notae* of the *una sancta*? Is the *Hilfswerktheologie* a mark of the Church?

The discussions of CA VIII raised many theological and practical problems.

1. The German theologians feared that Missouri's emphasis on the sovereignty of the congregation may lead either to Barth's Congregationalism and to enthusiasm or to doctrinal and ecclesiastical chaos. The dialectical theology sees reality only where an encounter and a subsequent event takes place. The congregation exists only where men have encountered Christ, where an event has occurred. Therefore the *Volkskirche* and ecclesiastical organizations cannot claim to be a church. Therefore Barth has advocated the principles of American Congregationalism in its radical form, and some Germans feared that Missouri's doctrine may lead to Barth's conclusions. The second fear is, that if the sovereignty of the congregation is properly carried through, no one will be able to exercise doctrinal discipline, since in their view the congregation alone is not competent to judge doctrine. Under present conditions it is, of course, extremely difficult, if not impossible, to implement the doctrine of the sovereignty of the congregation, since the *Volkskirche* as such is totally unable and entirely apathetic toward dogmatical debate. A "*Kerngemeinde*" within the large congregation, such as Luther envisaged, is probably the only solution at present.

2. The German theologians commented favorably on Missouri's principle which will permit church fellowship only on the basis of doctrinal unity. However, the fear was expressed that while Missouri had avoided the danger of falling into a doctrine of *work* righteousness, its insistence on purity of doctrine might lead to the greater danger of *doctrinal* righteousness. They were, therefore, deeply impressed when they saw evidence that strict confessionalism need not lead to dead orthodoxy, but on the contrary has produced a program of virile church activity. Through films and lectures they were given an insight into an average congregation's lay activity and into the widespread activities of a synodical organization. It was a revelation to many that the congregations carry the entire program.

3. The question of the Church and the Ministry gave occasion to discussing such questions as: Who has the Sacraments, the local congregation or the universal Church or the church government? Who is the author of the office? Is the *vocatio interna* a requisite for the validity of the call? It was very difficult at this point to avoid "speaking past each other" because of the different backgrounds, the one, the congregational and synodical, the other, episcopal. While the American Lutherans held that the validity of the call is determined

by the powers vested in the local congregation, the German theologians laid great emphasis on the ordination by the properly constituted authorities. Both groups of theologians, however, were agreed that the ministry is a divine institution.

4. The question of doctrinal and church discipline was discussed in great detail, especially the procedures whereby both the sovereignty of the congregation and the responsibility of each congregation toward the church at large can be maintained. Doctrinal discipline is extremely difficult under existing conditions in Europe, because the theological training is delegated to the universities as state institutions. While the close association of theological professors with their scientific and philosophical colleagues has distinct advantages, it naturally also implies definite dangers. Furthermore, the theological training is not directly related to the church life, nor is the theological professor officially responsible in his doctrinal position to Church. The problem of church discipline is equally difficult and complex. Many pastors are giving serious and conscientious thought to the problems of the *Volkskirche*. From our point of view, the nominal members of the *Volkskirchen* are not entitled to be viewed as members at all. In theory many pastors agree. But they maintain that these nominal members are still united with the Church although by very thin threads. Church discipline would alienate them from the Church completely and lead them into the camp of the anti-Christian forces. Nor are the German congregations ready for the introduction of church discipline according to Matthew 18. Considerable indoctrination as to the real purpose of church discipline and the personal responsibility of every Christian for his fellow man would have to precede. Fear that excommunication of large numbers of nominal Christians and the resultant failure to pay the church tax would cause an unbearable financial loss, plays a minor role, if any at all. Under normal economic conditions the active members with the aid of the endowments could probably finance their churches and the various activities. In fact, since the war the active members have contributed exceptionally large amounts for eleemosynary and missionary work. One pastor summarized the problem of the *Volkskirche* in these words: "We always inherit one generation which has not left the Church." The question may also be appropriately asked of the American representatives: Who has the greater spiritual responsibility: the German pastor of a *Volkskirche* with its large percentage of nominal members or the American Lutheran pastor with fifty per cent unchurched in his community?

Concerning the Lord's Supper

The important assignment to discuss CA X had been delegated to Dr. Paul M. Bretscher. He introduced the topic by giving a historical sketch of the position of American Lutherans on the doctrine of the Lord's Supper. While in the nineteenth century some Lutheran bodies in America had taken a rather liberal position, there has been a definite reversal. True, even in the present day there are isolated cases of serious aberrations from the Lutheran position. By and large it can be said that the American Lutheran churches subscribe to the spirit and the terminology of the Formula of Concord concerning the doctrine of the Lord's Supper. The essayist next presented a careful study of the words of institution and refuted the chief modern critical views concerning the words of institution. Following the Lutheran tradition he held that John 6 is not germane to the doctrine of the Lord's Supper. On the basis of the New Testament words of institution he showed, on the one hand, the Scripturalness of the three points stressed by Luther and the Formula of Concord, namely, the sacramental union, the oral manducation, and the Communion of the unworthy; and, on the other hand, the relevance of the *improbant secus docentes* in the Augsburg Confession. In view of the current situation in Europe, it was necessary to show that the Lord's Supper must not be viewed essentially as supplementing the Word, but as a personalized offering of the grace of God to the individual. It was also necessary to discuss altar fellowship as an act of confession. The Galesburg platform (Lutheran pulpits for Lutheran ministers, and Lutheran altars for Lutheran communicants), which is generally recognized by American Lutheran synods, presupposes doctrinal unity for altar fellowship.

Dr. Peter Brunner of the theological faculty at Heidelberg and professor of Practical Theology served as co-essayist in the first session. While the German churches do not enjoy the unity of doctrine on the Lord's Supper as do the American Lutheran churches, nevertheless, the pressure of the war gave new impetus to the spiritual life of the congregations. In support of this the essayist said that the Synod of Prussia resolved to re-examine its position on the doctrine and practice of the Lord's Supper; that in some territories the Lord's Supper is being celebrated every Sunday; that there is a greater participation of the Lord's Supper; and that the Berneuchen liturgical movement in Germany has revived interest in the study of the doctrine of the Lord's Supper and the relation of doctrine to liturgy.

Since CA X is a brief summary of what the Lutheran Church proclaims concerning the Lord's Supper, the essayist first gave an exposition of the content of this article. The words "*im Abendmahl*" state that the Lord's Supper must be celebrated, not only temporally and locally, but also instrumentally, that is, through the consecration the elements are designated only for the Lord's Supper, and thus the continuity with the first Lord's Supper is established. It is self-evident that the phrase "*im Abendmahl*," while not mentioning the words of institution, is to be understood as comprising consecration, distribution, and reception. — In view of Apology X the meaning of "species" (*Gestalt*) has been variously interpreted. According to Calvinism the sacramental action takes place on earth, but the sacramental union in heaven, a spiritual union wrought by the Holy Spirit. In Lutheran theology the union occurs in the Sacrament, where the bread and wine become the "bearers" of the body and blood of Christ, and this is the import of the phrase: "*Unter der Gestalt usw.*" — The phrase "*Der wahre Leib und Blut*" states unequivocally that the same body which came from the womb of Mary and which was crucified and resurrected, is distributed in the Lord's Supper. Not a pneumatic body, not Christ according to His divine nature, but the entire Christ in a somatic manner is present in the Lord's Supper. In the act of distributing the heavenly elements the Cross becomes contemporaneous.

The simple words "*ausgeteilt und genommen*" make the Lord's Supper very objective and therefore certain, for in the moment of the "encounter" the body and blood of Christ are present for me. The signatories to the *Tetrapolitana* (Zwingli) would have signed the Augsburg Confession if *vescentibus* were changed to *fidelibus*. But Article X teaches that all communicants receive the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper, regardless of the faith or unbelief of the administrant or the communicant. — The essayist pointed out that German Lutherans are conscious of the implications of the "*improbant secus docentes*" in the current church situation. It is significant that the word *improbant* and not *damnant* is used. Did the Lutherans at Augsburg hope for a union with the Zwinglian theologians, a union which was almost realized six years later in the Wittenberg Formula, but declared impossible a year later at Smalcald? In the second part the essayist showed that CA X was fully Scriptural and demanded our unqualified subscription. The modern historico-dogmatic investigations, however, have raised a problem as to the priority of the Synoptics' or St. Paul's account of the institution of the Lord's Supper. The essayist stated that 1 Corinthians 10 and

11 are a commentary on the Synoptics. Both stress the Real Presence, Paul's emphasis being that in the Lord's Supper we proclaim Christ's death.

At the second conference Pastor Dr. Schwinn of Starnberg, Bavaria, served as co-essayist. In spite of very short notice he presented a penetrating essay. His concern was to find the answer for modern man's question concerning the essence of the Lord's Supper, especially since the liturgy and the communal aspect of the Sacrament have been stressed both in the Roman and in the Evangelical Churches. There is a tendency to distinguish between the prophetic and the priestly office and to view the divine service like an ellipse with two distinct focal points, the Word and the Sacraments.

The chief part of this essay dealt with the relation of the Lord's Supper to the entire *heilsgeschichtliche* revelation. He presented several points to support his thesis. The Lord's Supper is a *heilsgeschichtliche Offenbarung*, because the Sacrament is God's "Tatwort," for when God speaks, He also acts. And thus the Lord's Supper is a continuous Good Friday. It furthermore reveals the miracle of the incarnation, where "the finite is capable of the infinite." In opposition to a complete emptying of the Lord's Supper or a magical concept of it, we must maintain that the Lord is truly present in, with, and under the elements. The Lord's Supper is *heilsgeschichtlich* because it is a revelation for the total man in his entire corporeality. Man cannot be viewed dualistically, for body and soul constitute one personality, and the Lord's Supper meets the needs of man in his unitary personality. The view that only the body requires salvation, and the theory that only the spirit is capable of salvation, are rejected as contrary to the revelation in the Lord's Supper. The *heilsgeschichtliche Offenbarung* is always God's gift, for in it He calls us to faith. This is true especially of the Lord's Supper, where God's efficacy is not made dependent upon the individual's faith, nor the objectivity of God's revelation reduced to an *opus operatum*. Faith is not of the essence of God's revelation in the Supper, but necessary for the appropriation of God's revelation.

The Sacrament is *heilsgeschichtliche* revelation, because, furthermore, in it the entire Christ as God and man is revealed to us. For our salvation we require the entire Christ, also in His incarnation. It is for this reason that John 6 becomes very relevant in a discussion of the Lord's Supper. In fact, only the Lutheran can rightly estimate and appreciate John 6:53, for it presents Christ not for our meditation, but for our revelation. Finally, a *heilsgeschichtliche* rev-

elation occurs in the Lord's Supper, because here God reveals man's goal, his re-union with God. The Word and the Sacrament are not entirely identical, for the Word in the Sacrament completes the spiritual-corporeal (mystical?) union with Christ. This shows the significance of the Real Presence. And in this light John 6:63 can be understood correctly only in Lutheran theology.

The essayist insisted that every church must take a confessional stand toward this *heilsgeschichtliche* revelation in the Supper. The salient point in this revelation is not the mode, but the fact of the Real Presence. This has been obscured or obliterated by Rome, Zwinglianism, and Calvinism. In conclusion the essayist showed the relation of the Lord's Supper and the doctrine of justification. In the Lord's Supper the fullness of the doctrine of justification finds expression, for where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation. In the final analysis, the three articles of our Christian faith become a whole in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper brings us to the limits of time and space, and the ultimate distance is removed through the sacramental nearness.

In the third conference Lic. M. Kiunke, professor of Church History at the Free Church Theological Seminary near Frankfurt, was the essayist. His historical orientation prompted him to show that Rome's sacramentalism and the Sacramentarians' enthusiasm are still the two extremes which confront Scriptural theology. No significant innovations have arisen which require new doctrinal formulations. Unless the congregations are again acquainted with the Lutheran doctrine on the Lord's Supper, anthroposophy, gnosticism, and the Berneuchen liturgical movement on the one hand, and Pentecostalism on the other hand will completely emasculate what is left of the Lord's Supper in the Church of Germany. It is therefore essential that the intimate relation of Word and Sacrament be clearly stated. There can be no arbitrary or spiritual interpretation of the Lord's Supper, according to the analogy that doctrines taught figuratively at one place are clearly taught at another and that an unknown truth if taught in a figure of speech would remain unknown. There can be no certainty if the truth is based on a tropical interpretation. The liberal theologian in so far as he doubts the inerrancy of Scripture can, of course, attain no certainty concerning the relation of the Word and the Sacrament. The Lutheran Confessions maintain the intimate relation of the Lord's Supper to the Word: The word makes the Sacrament, and the Sacrament gives emphasis to the word. Word and Sacrament stand in correlative and reciprocal relation.

—The Lord's Supper is related further to the doctrine of the incarnation. The necessity of maintaining this becomes evident especially in the antithesis to Calvin. His dualism is evident in the manner in which he understands the relation of the sign and the thing signified, for example, the blood of the animals of the Old Testament is a sign of the blood of Christ in the New Testament. Likewise, the bread is only a sign of the body of Christ, or the action taking place in the Lord's Supper on earth is a sign of what is transpiring in heaven. This is the old Neoplatonic and Greek world view, whereas Luther has overcome this Platonic spirit. The Lutheran Christology is, of course, not the starting point for the doctrine of the real presence. Nevertheless, it stands in close relation to it, and the sacramental union is unthinkable without the Lutheran Christology. —The Lord's Supper is most intimately related to the doctrine of justification. But is there not a danger that this central doctrine, and faith in particular, is jeopardized by the close juxtaposition of the corporeal in the Sacrament and faith? On the contrary, for the significance of the Lord's Supper lies in its blessing, the forgiveness of sins. —The close relation between the Lord's Supper and the confession must always be maintained not only in theory, but also in practice. The Lord's Supper is a miracle. Man is offended at the *deus incorporeus* and still more so at the *deus corporeus*. Therefore we dare never yield to the Catholic magical concept, nor to the Reformed rational interpretation of the Lord's Supper. Every Scriptural doctrine must be a matter of confession in the church's theology and life. —And finally the relation of the Lord's Supper to the Church must be properly observed. The Lord's Supper is not the Church's missionary instrument. The Sacrament is for Christians only, in fact, separates the Christians from the non-Christians, while it unites the Christians in the Lord. Our congregations will become real Communion congregations if we stress the correct doctrine at all times.

In connection with the discussion on the Lord's Supper several points should be noted.

1. While the difference between Lutheran and Reformed theology comes to the surface in the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, the fact is that the Reformed principle *Finitum non est capax infiniti* is evident throughout Reformed theology in its distinction from Lutheran theology, particularly in the doctrine of God (the sovereignty of God), of man (dualism), and of Christ (Nestorianism). There are some who do not grant the existence of such a sharp cleavage. This view

is reflected in the attempt to find "a new exegetical approach" to the doctrine of the Lord's Supper. They hope that a re-examination of the words of institution may provide a Scriptural basis for altar fellowship between Lutherans and Reformed, and are at present concerned with two questions: a. Does St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 10 and 11 offer a commentary to the Synoptic report, or does St. Paul's report precede historically that of the Synoptics? b. Is St. John, chapter 6, applicable to the doctrine of the Lord's Supper?

2. In some Lutheran state churches the liturgy had been virtually abolished. In one territorial church there is no liturgical consecration of the elements; the words of institution are spoken when the elements are distributed to the communicants. In other sections there has been a strong revival of the liturgy, especially in the Berneuchner movement. In Germany the term "liturgy" is understood in its basic meaning, as *leiturgia*, as *Gottesdienst*, in which God uses the Sacrament to "proclaim the dogma." Some believe that the liturgy understood thus is essential to the Lord's Supper and that a revival of a liturgical service in all Lutheran churches is necessary. Others seem to use the term "liturgy" to denote *man's* service, which makes the liturgy a sacrifice.

3. The most vexing problem seems to be the right definition of the Real Presence. Is the entire Christ present or only His body and blood? Is the *Christus praesens* the *heilsgeschichtliche Christus*? Does the Formula of Concord, Article VII, present the Scriptural doctrine concerning the real presence? Or does this article go beyond Luther's doctrine.

4. All are agreed that the benefit of the Lord's Supper is the strengthening of our faith in the forgiveness of sins. A large number, however, asked whether there was not a plus beyond this blessing of the Lord's Supper. In its antithesis to Calvinism with a dualistic view of man and the overemphasis of the spiritual in man, it is necessary in Europe, more so than in American Lutheranism, to stress that the benefits of the Lord's Supper are for the entire person. Luther's comments in the Large Catechism on the benefits of Baptism and the Lord's Supper for the body are, of course, well known. — Do we stress the eschatological significance of the Lord's Supper sufficiently? Good Friday and Easter (the resurrection) must always stand together, for as Loehe said, a Communion hymn must also be "*ein Ewigkeitslied*."

5. Naturally, altar fellowship was a vital topic of discussion, since the sessions were simultaneous with the meetings at Eisenach,

where the constitution of the EKID was adopted.* Therefore the question discussed revolved about the question whether the Reformed have the Lord's Supper, and particularly about the conditions for altar fellowship. The question was asked, whether the fellowship established in Baptism is of a wider scope than the fellowship of the Lord's Supper or whether the same conditions for admission to both Sacraments ought not to be established; and the answer was given that the Lord's Supper is also a profession of faith, and such profession of faith presupposes a doctrinal fellowship.

Concerning Church and State

On the basis of CA XVI and XXVIII, 12—18, Dr. Graebner stated that the Augustana sets forth the proper relation of Church and State. It distinguishes the two, but does not separate the two absolutely, for both are necessary, each having its specific functions, which must be clearly distinguished. Since there is no absolute separation of Church and State, the CA abstains from rendering a judgment on the *Landeskirche* as an institution. On the other hand, it must be observed that, while a so-called "Christian state" is possible, the authority of the State is not founded on the New Testament ethic, but on the universally accepted Moral Law. In America the principles of the Augustana are embodied in the American constitution, and the roots of democracy lie in the Lutheran Reformation, especially in Luther's firm stand at Worms. Luther carefully avoided a mingling of Church and State. Luther broke with the existing Church because of the usurpation of political power on the part of the bishops. When Luther appealed to the princes, he did so not because they were princes, but the "chief members" of the Church. Luther cannot be held responsible for the mingling of Church and State, or of the State and the Church. Luther's approach to the entire question is a result of his new concept of the Christian man in his relation to the Church, the State, his family, and to society.

* The EKID after two days of discussion on open altar fellowship adopted the following paragraph:

"IV, 4 Ueber die Zulassung zum Heiligen Abendmahl besteht innerhalb der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland keine volle Uebereinstimmung. In vielen Gliedkirchen werden Angehoerige eines andern in der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland geltenden Bekenntnisses ohne Einschraenkung zugelassen. In keiner Gliedkirche wird einem Angehoerigen eines in der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland geltenden Bekenntnisses der Zugang zum Tisch des Herrn verwehrt, wo seelsorgerliche Verantwortung oder gemeindliche Verhaeltnisse die Zulassung gebieten. Die rechtliche Kirchenzugehoerigkeit und die Bestimmungen ueber die allgemeine Kirchengzucht bleiben in jedem Falle unberuehrt."

The impact of the social changes on ecclesiastical development in general and on the Christian social ethics in particular are undeniable. Many of these social trends are a distinct danger to church life. On the other hand, the Church's quietism and isolationism in matters of general welfare and of politics is a danger for Lutheranism. At the present time the lack of a thoroughly developed Lutheran social ethics is very noticeable. Many questions in the realm of social behavior have as yet found no satisfactory answer, for example, the conduct of the Christian in an unjust war, the limits of a government and its demand for obedience. An answer must be given to such questions as: Are we to render obedience only in that which is right or also in that which is permissible? Are we governed by a natural law, an unwritten law, or only by a definitely fixed and written law? Martin Chemnitz commenting on Matt. 22:21 answers that we must render to the magistrate what is his, namely, everything that is due him by natural right (*Naturrecht*), by common consent and custom (*Gewohnheitsrecht*), or by statutory legislation (*rechtmässige Gesetze*). He cannot usurp that which is God's, namely, the right to determine the confessions or the liturgy.

The German essayist at the first session was Dr. Eugene Gerstenmaier, head of the *Evangelisches Hilfswerk* with headquarters at Stuttgart. Dr. Gerstenmaier was a political prisoner and liberated by the American forces. In the spring of 1948 he came to America to acquaint himself with the church life of the Missouri Synod and to help in planning the meetings for Bad Boll. The essayist showed that the CA had greater influence in the shaping of the social ethics in Europe and Germany than either Thomas Aquinas or J. J. Rousseau. All governments are created by God and are therefore good, and obedience to them is obligatory. The Lutheran Church has no room for asceticism, in fact, it has raised the social ethics to a higher level by making the conscience of the individual person responsible for his every social action. Article XVI presents not an individualistic, but a social ethic, which in the final analysis is the only realistic ethics. Lutherans, however, have as a rule become very personalistic in their social outlook and are satisfied to permit the State to function in their stead. This has given rise to the charge that Lutheran ethics lead to Quietism. The question therefore is in order whether the CA is still adequate. To answer our question it is necessary to inquire as to the essence of a legitimate order, an order which recognizes man as God's highest creation. The Christian faith views the world as God's creation and man as living under God's ordinances and at the same time under the domination of sin.

The dignity of law and order must be maintained as God's creation and must be viewed as belonging to the First and not the Second Article of our Christian faith. When the divinely established orders, such as the family, the State, society, lose their God-intended content, they become a hell on earth. All human orders come under the Law and not under the Gospel, in fact, they have no validity outside of God's Law. Therefore every ethical decision must always be made in relation to God's ordinance. The Augsburg Confession rightly recognizes that no ethical decision apart from the orientation in the divine Law is valid.

Every member of society must gauge his ethical decisions on one criterion alone, namely: Does my decision conform to the essence and the spirit of the Law? The criterion dare not be: Does my action conform to the outward form and letter of the Law? It has become increasingly difficult to make social ethical decisions, because government has virtually disappeared in our modern society. The modern State is either a dictatorship or a democracy. Rome has developed a code of ethics and has found the solution for all social problems which apparently require little initiative on the part of the individual. The Lutheran Christian, however, is held personally responsible for his social decisions. He is therefore confronted by a serious dilemma. As a Christian he is, on the one hand, under the entire Bible, both Law and Gospel, and for him the natural light is insufficient to determine social action. As a member of a democratic society he is, on the other hand, confronted by anthropological views which contrary to the Scriptures deny natural man's total depravity, but ascribe to such a *Schrumpfmensch* the ability to make ethical decisions. Thus modern man is caught on one or the other horn of a dilemma and becomes enmeshed in a false ideology.

The essayist at the second session was Prof. Dr. Freiherr H. von Campenhausen, since 1937 professor of Church History at Heidelberg and in 1948 rector of the university. It was his considered opinion that the relevant articles of the Augustana (XVI and XXVIII, 12—18) on Church and State contain all the essential points on civil affairs, for they recognize the divine ordinance of the State and the proper distinction between the secular and the spiritual realms. The article grew out of the existing antithesis, on the one hand, against the Enthusiasts who spiritualized the social order and advocated the overthrow of the existing State, and on the other hand, against Rome, which either advocates an ascetic world flight or usurps world dominance. In opposition to both views, the Augsburg Confession recognizes the autonomy of the State. Though the article

was formulated four hundred years ago, it is still adequate today. However, we must always view this article in relation to the entire Confession, and in that light the article becomes an antithesis not only to Enthusiasm and Rome, but also to the modern totalitarian State and its totalitarian claim. The Confession is also adequate inasmuch as it covers all the salient points on this problem, for the Augsburg Confession is concerned only with stating the principles for the secular order and not with giving a description of its organization. The article permits various forms of the social order.

The real intent of the Augsburg Confession can be determined best by a study of the New Testament or of Luther's writings. The New Testament teaches both: personal responsibility and self-determination as well as the sovereignty and divine institution of the State. This implies that one must always view the social problems in relation to the totality of life. Christ therefore, on the one hand, sanctions the possession of wealth and, on the other hand, pronounces a curse upon the wealthy who fall prey to the dangers of wealth; or Christ lifts marriage above all other estates, e. g., celibacy, and yet warns against "taking a wife" under conditions which will prevent entry into His kingdom. The Christian must therefore always view the world as an inn and himself as a stranger in the world. It is the Christian's business to live such a life that the paradox is constantly being solved.

This paradox applies also in the evaluation of the government. According to Romans 13 the pagan state is a divine ordinance, but according to First Peter and John's Revelation it is a satanic power. The solution for this paradox is found only if the Christian retains his heavenly *politeia*. The solution of the paradox does not lie in changing a government from a totalitarian to a democratic state. In vain have the Germans swallowed rich doses of various recipes to cure their social evils. The world, the State, the family are all creations of God and as such good and holy, and yet, because they are contaminated and corrupted by sin, they become perilous. Therefore the Christian must always use these creations so that he will never lose his eschatological perspective. All our thinking must finally culminate in the concluding doctrinal article of the Augsburg Confession, Article XVII on Eschatology.

Dr. Hans Asmussen, a leader of the *Bekennende Kirche* and a consistent opponent of Hitler, served as essayist during the last conference. By way of introduction he expressed his deep appreciation of the opportunity offered at Bad Boll for German theologians to

work conjointly with the Americans in a restudy of the Augsburg Confession. He stated that Article XVI determines the Christian's attitude toward all social institutions. On the negative side the article must denounce those who place themselves above all social orders in their attempt to establish a spiritual order, or those who withdraw from all social orders in their search for perfection. The Augsburg Confession recognizes the social order as a divine institution to which the Christian owes obedience, not as an automaton, but as a responsible personality. Luther, for example, did not grant the soldier the right to shift the moral responsibility of his participation in war to his superiors, for, though subject of a divinely ordained government, he is personally responsible for his actions. Thus the Christian constantly finds himself in a dilemma. He must obey because the government is of divine origin, and, on the other hand, he may be compelled to refuse obedience when the government is involved in wrongdoing, lest he also become a criminal. The solution to this dilemma lies in the Christian paradox that the Christian is a citizen in two realms, one governed by the Law and the other ruled by the Gospel.

The complacent optimism of a former day is gone, which said "conditions must improve because the world is inherently good." In place of this optimism we now have a nihilistic pessimism. In the face of the greatest disappointments the Augsburg Confession reminds us that every political and social ordinance is a divine creation and the good work of God. Of course, the modern disillusioned man views this as a heresy and apparently contrary to his experience. The statement of the Augsburg Confession can therefore be understood only *sub specie aeternitatis*. Whatsoever serves the final purpose of the world is a good work, and Christians use God's ordinances as "interim" instruments. Though many feel that the Augsburg Confession is outmoded, since even its terminology is no longer understood, it remains true nevertheless that the proper distinction between government and subject must be observed. This in the final analysis is only an application of the proper distinction of Law and Gospel. The State can never seek its orientation in the Gospel, as Reformed theology would have it, nor can the Church be built on the Law, as all systems of work-righteousness advocate. The Gospel teaches Christians to evaluate the social orders in their proper sphere and teaches us never to take our intercession for the government out of the Fourth Petition and place it into the Second.

Again, certain points should be noted here.

1. In the interest of security the Military Government encourages Americans traveling in Germany under a military permit to prepare

a brief of their proposed activity and to submit it to the responsible government officials. The Religious Affairs of Military Government, through whom the Bad Boll commissioners had been cleared, were keenly interested in the theological and political implications of CA XVI for present Germany.

2. It was only natural that the discussion on this doctrine became very animated at times. This was due to a number of factors. It must be remembered that some leading churchmen were involved in the attempt (1944) upon Hitler's life, and the overtones of this episode could be heard throughout the discussion. Many of the leading churchmen had been in concentration camps because of their opposition to Hitler, while others, because of a false interpretation of Article XVI, permitted Hitler to inaugurate his anti-Christian program without protest. If one considers what heartaches were caused by the Nazi government and later by the Russian occupation forces, one will appreciate the deep feeling that came to the surface during the discussions. One pastor reported the indescribably brutal and immoral acts to which he and his poor wife were subjected by a "constituted" government. The different orientation must furthermore be kept in mind. The one group came from a country with a stable government and now functioning as the government of the vanquished, the other virtually without a government in the modern sense of the word. The latter ask the former: Can an occupation army be defined as government? Has God placed this government over them according to Romans 13? These questions were discussed in a fraternal spirit and without animosity, and always on the highest theological plane. Finally, the fact that two political ideologies were represented became quite evident. The Germans asked the Americans whether in a democracy the distinction between government and subject is not entirely erased. How can subjects respect and fear a government established by their own choice?

3. The "apocalyptic" events of the past decade left an unmistakable imprint on the German theologians' thinking concerning the problem of Church and State. They find it very difficult to read Romans 13 without reference to Revelation 13. The new ideology of Eastern Europe has placed eschatology still more into the center of the German thinking than during the Hitler regime. What will their attitude be if they should be subject to a government whose political philosophy is based on an atheistic premise (*die Entgoetterung der Welt*), an ideology which to some is a portent of *ruina mundi*. Quite naturally the thoughts of the participants at Bad Boll were frequently directed to the churches behind the Iron Curtain.

As yet the front against the Church has not closed its ranks there, but the wedges of nihilism and materialism are being driven into this front. Bishop Beste, when asked what the churches in the eastern zones are doing to present a solid front, answered: "Our people sing hymns of praise." These were unforgettable discussions.

4. The Christian finds himself in two realms, the one governed according to the Law, the other according to the Gospel. This raises the questions: Where is the source of the law according to which the State is governed? Is there such a thing as the natural law? What is the natural right on which the State is based? Can the modern State function as a good State without the Gospel, guided purely by man's conscience and the natural law?

5. Is it the duty of the Church as a Church to proclaim the Law to the State, especially when governments tyrannize the consciences? If the Church has this obligation, how can it implement the Law without establishing a theocracy? Or is Calvin's ideal probably the best form of government for modern conditions? In a country where the Church has become an integral part of the social order, the question naturally arises whether the Church has the *munus propheticum*. Naturally the opinions were divided on this point, but all were agreed that the Church has the office of intercession.

6. The recent experiences prompted the German Lutherans to ask whether a Christian ever has the right to revolt against a tyrannical government, and whether a plot against the constituted government can be sanctioned by the Gospel. Some found the answer to this vital question in history, "the vestiges of God's will," which shows that every private attack upon authorities has failed. The Church must therefore use the only power which has been given to it, namely, the power of the Gospel.

7. The Christian is indeed a citizen of two kingdoms, and he accepts the Gospel, which teaches him to view all orders as *interim* instruments. However, the Christian must never be a *passive* partaker of these instruments.

8. There is a definite need for a clear-cut formulation of Lutheran social ethics oriented in the New Testament and the Lutheran Confessions. The Roman Catholics have such a formulation. But it is a descriptive ethics, which offers a solution for every moral problem in society and relieves the individual of personal responsibility. Emil Brunner has done pioneer work in the field of formulating ethics from the Reformed point of view. It is high time that Lutheran scholars do the same thing in the field of Lutheran social ethics.

9. The American theologians endeavored to define democracy as a political philosophy in which the dignity of the individual person is properly recognized. It became necessary to counteract the wrong view which would equate Christianity and democracy, an opinion so frequently expressed by American churchmen.

10. In 1530 the Lutherans could address their king with wholehearted assurance: "King by the grace of God," and could include the government in the Fourth Petition. Can German Lutherans, since 1934 and 1945, so view the government, or must they perhaps include the government in the Seventh Petition? While Article XVII was not included in the program, the final discussions definitely revealed the dominant eschatological note of the current theological thinking. May all theological thinking and action always take place *sub specie aeternitatis*!

CHAPTER III

Evaluation

The significance of Bad Boll can be understood only in the light of the theological and ecclesiastical changes which have taken place, the tensions which have arisen as an aftermath of the war, and the problems connected with the present rehabilitation of the churches. It is highly significant that the former theological liberalism has been discarded to an astonishing degree by most theological faculties of the universities. The Barthian influence has ushered in a Luther renaissance, and this in turn has resulted in a restudy of the Word of God. The terrible catastrophe has led many pastors to a new understanding of sin and grace, which is evident in sound evangelical preaching. Of course, the total collapse of 1945 has also raised many spiritual and moral problems with which theologians are wrestling, notably the problem of individual and social guilt, guilt in the sight of God and toward one's fellow man, the Christian's ethical standards in the light of the complete collapse of the political, economic, and moral life of the nation.

Since the short-lived Weimar Republic the relation between Church and State has undergone a basic change. When the princes lost their estates in 1918 and bishops became the heads of the Church, the term *Landeskirche* took on a new meaning. In speaking of the *Landeskirchen* one must keep in mind that this term denotes all the *Volkskirchen*, or parishes within a particular province under the respective church government. The *Landeskirche* is not a *Staatskirche*. The confessional standard in the various *Landeskirchen* is fixed by the churches themselves or through the respective church government. Some features of the former church system remain: The *Volkskirche* comprises and serves all baptized persons; every person pays his church tax unless he has openly severed his connections with the Church; the State, serving as the Church's agent, collects the church tax levied by the Church. With few exceptions the clergy is trained at the state universities by a State-appointed theological faculty. It is only natural that the reorganization of the churches in a country where virtually all institutions have been shaken to their very foundations presents almost insolvable problems.

No doubt, the most vital, at least the most tense, problem before

the German churches at present is the attempt to unite all German Evangelicals in the EKID. At the organizational meeting held at Eisenach in July, 1948, two problems in particular were thoroughly discussed. Is EKID a church or a federation? According to the Constitution, Article I, the EKID is organized as a *federation* of Lutheran, Reformed, and Evangelical (*Unierte*) churches. In the opinion of many, EKID cannot be viewed as a church, since it has no confessional basis and does not practice altar fellowship, two constituent factors of a church. However, in the opinion of others, even some leaders, the EKID is held to be a church, since the Constitution ascribes to the EKID the rights and functions which can be ascribed only to a church, e. g., the joint testimony against heresy, the fostering of fellowship. The second problem concerns altar fellowship between the constituent churches in the EKID. In the opinion of some, indiscriminate altar fellowship is sanctioned and even encouraged in Article IV, 4 (cp. p. 44, footnote). The participants at the Eisenach meeting, however, state that Article IV, 4 is declaratory and descriptive, inasmuch as it merely states the presently existing casuistic problems due to the tremendous mass migrations, and does not *de jure* establish promiscuous altar fellowship. The tensions have been increased through the organization of the VELKD. Some advocates of the EKID believe that this organic union of all Lutheran churches will definitely undermine the larger union of all Evangelicals, while the proponents of the Lutheran union hope to strengthen the Lutheran consciousness. The overtones of all these changes, tensions, and problems were clearly audible throughout every session, every private conference, in every conversation. The Americans were therefore compelled to make a tremendous emotional adjustment in order to enter sympathetically into all the problems and make a real contribution.

Another problem was that of theological methodology. The German theologians usually employ the problematic, philological, and dogmatico-historical method. This may be due to the fact that the theological faculties are constantly in contact with the law, philosophy, and science faculties at the universities, and as a result their theology and method have an entirely different orientation than one which is geared to the needs of the Church. Traditionally the German theologians are thorough, and most of the theological professors can be said to be brilliant scholars. Their insights into theological problems are penetrating and extremely stimulating. The American theological method can be said to be more Scripture-oriented and more definitely integrated with the actual church life. The two groups

of theologians, speaking from entirely different experiences, naturally had their own terminology. The language barrier was not as serious as the semantic problem.

The important question is whether the meeting at Bad Boll accomplished a worth-while purpose, both for the German Church and for American Lutheranism. In reporting the outcome of the three sessions to Dr. A. Olson, Chief of Religious Affairs, the Americans stated:

The purpose can best be expressed in the word "*theologische Begegnung*" — a real meeting of minds by German and American theologians took place. The object of the convention was the strengthening of the morale of the Protestant clergy of Germany, and the establishment of cordial relations of our respective American and European communions. Cordial relations of friendship must result from a project which, aside from its more immediate purposes, gave rare occasions, after years of disruption, to some notable Christian leaders to meet and gain insight into each other's problems and needs. We have sought to make good use of the opportunity thus created for the demonstration of a democratic spirit and for the acquainting of some of the more influential church leaders in Protestant Europe with the ideals motivating the efforts of our Military Government. The theologians at Bad Boll did not meet as representatives of two continents with divergent political and cultural ideologies. The common problems and the desire of mutual helpfulness erased the barriers which until recently existed between America and Germany. A genuinely warm Christian spirit dominated all sessions and private discussions, and the transcendent bond of Christian fellowship was constantly in evidence.

The real meaning of Bad Boll can be summarized best if we reproduce the evaluation of Bad Boll as stated in German letters and periodicals. A periodical stated: "We have learned to view the brethren from Missouri in a new light, also their theology. Their theology is not as heavily burdened with problems as ours. But just in this they have an important lesson for us. There is a definite practical aspect to their theology, which is concerned in training parish ministers." A professor writes: "Nothing made as deep an impression on me as the attempt of your professors not to electrify us with high learning or personal magnetism, but to be, in the first place, God's teachers in the Church. I do not believe that anywhere in Germany four professors would be able to speak in the plural 'we' as your men have done." Another professor writes: "For the American theologians the starting point in all discussions was what is written in the Scriptures and the Confessions. It was a theology speaking out of faith, whereas the German theology so easily may be oriented in reason.

That you have sounded a warning against such a theology is to me the essential contribution of our meetings." A superintendent writes: "The sincerity of the American theologians made a deep impression. Though the German essayists investigated the problems more deeply than the American theologians, nevertheless, it would be a mistake to overestimate German theology. While the German theologians frequently endeavored to find a dogmatic formulation by a scholarly study of the Confessions, the American theologians have simply stated what the Confessions teach, and I have developed a new appreciation for this approach." Another writes: "In the theological terminology there was a considerable difference because the methods of the two continents are so different. The German theologian finds himself under the necessity of a theology of speculation, a theology of encounter, while the American theology emphasizes the foundational and abiding facts of theology which need not be changed in every generation. The American theology has a tremendous plus in practical theology."

The difference in the theology of the two continents was expressed by a periodical as follows: "The problem for American theologians is primarily of an intellectual and moral character, that of the Germans primarily existential. By this we do not mean to say that one theology is more important than the other. At Bad Boll we Germans had occasion to admire the conscientious theological contributions which the American theologians rendered. We definitely gained the deep impression that the emphasis on orthodoxy does not in any way prevent them from coming to grips with the questions of the modern world. On the contrary, a confessional position aids in the solution of the modern problems. For the time being German theology is confronted by other problems than the American Church, and as a result the approach of the Church to the world differs on the two continents. Possibly a day will soon come when both American and German Lutherans will be extremely grateful that they became acquainted at Bad Boll."

Another editor writes: "The difference between the two groups of theologians can be traced to this, that the representatives of the Missouri Synod came from a Church, a country, and a history which did not experience the upheavals to which the Germans were exposed, and this was reflected in the manner in which they presented their theological essays. They were excellent, Scripturally grounded expositions of the Confessions presented with deep sincerity and penetrating clarity. The Germans, however, came from a destroyed country, from a Church disturbed by internal and external crises and broken-down orders and shattered ideals. Like the American, so the

German theology is firmly grounded on the foundation of Scripture and Confessions. But its marching orders differed from those of the Missourians."

A pastor of the Free Church writes: "During the first days we overheard several critical remarks such as 'infantile,' 'naive,' but as the participants gained an insight into the work of the Missouri Synod, the reaction was that the theology of this Church must be taken seriously. A theology which is not satisfied with an unproductive problematics, but develops such an active church life deserves serious consideration. The tact and kindness of the American representatives was frequently mentioned. Possibly we of the Free Church are able to learn a lesson from you." A retired church official said: "It was extremely valuable that you gave us a realistic picture of the life and work of your Church through your essays, which showed penetrating study of the Scriptures and were based upon the treasures of the fathers. We are deeply indebted to you for your many deeds of kindness, not the least being the strengthening which we received from your joyful testimony concerning the grace of God. God has sent modern mankind strong delusions, and you have warned with a holy zeal and in obedience toward the pure doctrine of the Gospel to avoid the vagaries of false teachers. We are ready to give your word and warning a wholehearted hearing, so that we may better develop the understanding of the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions for your critical examination." A news reporter writes: "The most important factor in my opinion is, that a mutual confidence was established at Bad Boll, a confidence which assumes that the other is determined to study seriously the Scriptures and Confessions and to proclaim in undiminished form the full Gospel truth. Then the basis is gained for a further fruitful exchange." A pastor writes: "In listening to His Word we really achieved a real meeting, and in wrestling for the truth we came to a happy agreement in all major points. It certainly would be a blessed fruit if the meeting of two continents could be continued."

A pastor of the strongly conservative *Schwabacher Konvent* writes: "I was greatly surprised that the form of your Lutheranism meets our ideals of Lutheran theology, yes, in many respects you presented it more purely than we have done in the past. I had not expected this. All truths of God's revelation necessary for salvation have been presented with such force and clarity that I was highly elated. Your theology is a theology of the Church and leads to a program of congregational activity. Also in our interpretation we were agreed, though I believe that it is necessary to avoid some of your

statements lest you be charged with Docetism. 'The Word was made flesh' could easily be expounded 'The Word became words.' There is an encounter, not with the sacred Book, but with the living Lord and then we can say: 'Scripture is the Word of God and not only that Scripture contains the Word of God, and the canon is forever fixed.' Your Church in planning and casting these conferences has made sacrifices in money, time, and manpower which is without its counterpart in modern church history. It was a great joy for us that capable and experienced theologians were able to lead us into the inexhaustible treasure of our Lutheran Confessions. Since our student days we have not had such an experience. The most significant fact was that in all essays the clear testimony of our Lutheran Confessions was emphatically and successfully set forth in so large a circle of theologians, and that the great unity of faith which permeates the churches of the Lutheran Confessions on both sides of the ocean was brought so forcibly to the fore. Thus you have rendered us Germans in a decisive moment a valuable service."

A bishop writes: "Our meeting with your team of the Lutheran Church which can say: 'We believe, teach, and confess,' has made a deep impression upon us German theologians who are still suffering from the aftereffects of an unbiblical subjectivism. I was very glad to experience true ecumenicity at Bad Boll; true, because the one aim was to direct the attention to the truth of the saving Gospel. Our fellowship did not rest upon similar political or social interests, but our fellowship was with the Father and with the Son. It is my deep conviction that the Lord will keep His promise and that they who first seek the Kingdom of God will be given all things, also this treasure, that they may be able to render a service unto life everlasting to their people and to the world." A church official writes: "We are ready to confess that in our meeting with the American brethren we have learned much and have still more to learn. One lesson in particular is significant: There is a point at which we no longer need to fall prey to our doubts and to our specific German problematics, namely, there where one with childlike faith accepts the Word of the Savior. True, we knew it, but we did not live this truth. This was the gift of the American brethren."

A good summary was submitted by a pastor of the Breslau Synod: "During the past years, the general impression of the German clergy about the Missouri Synod was that it is a sect which is dominated by tradition and which thoroughly lacks any research faculties and scholarship. In the first two or three days of the Bad Boll convention, this impression of the Missouri Synod gradually underwent

a change, and today the general evaluation is that the Missouri Synod, although it adheres strictly to seventeenth-century Lutheran orthodoxy, has nevertheless a living, vibrant orthodoxy based on a continuous restudy of the Scriptures and the Confessions in the light of ever-changing problems confronting the Church. The German clergy at this conference is gradually being persuaded that the Missouri Synod has something which the German clergy has lacked in the past decades and that it is absolutely essential to the life of the German Church to take under serious consideration and study those doctrines which Missouri has presented here at Bad Boll and which have not been a part of the theological study and life of the German Lutheran Church."

A superintendent stated in his official publication that the twentieth century will be noted for its ecumenical thinking and the attempts to heal the breaches in Christendom. Probably the deepest cleft is the division in Lutheranism caused in part by the refusal of the Missouri Synod to unite with all the other Lutherans and particularly in displaying an attitude as though they were the only custodians of the truth. They seemed to believe that German Lutheranism had virtually sacrificed its Lutheran heritage. He then continues: "In view of this we were surprised that 400 German Lutherans were invited to participate in theological discussions with professors of the Missouri Synod. Some of us asked whether the hosts did not probably have in mind to instruct us Germans concerning the correct understanding of the Lutheran Confessions. However, the discussion proved that this suspicion was entirely unfounded. From the very beginning a spirit of fraternity and candor prevailed. It became increasingly patent that in this meeting the ecumenical interests began at that point where it is most essential and at the same time most promising. It was not necessary to find a common basis, for the main articles of the Augsburg Confession had been placed into the center of all discussions. All were motivated by a willingness to listen and to learn one from the other. In our earnest theological endeavors it became evident that the theologians of the two continents had not only gone different ways, but had also been led differently. . . . In Bad Boll both have learned much from each other and have gained an understanding of each other. Naturally not all problems could be discussed and satisfactorily answered in the first meeting. However, the serious manner in which the questions of either group were taken suggests, yes, demands that a similar meeting be arranged and opportunity be given to remove the differences which separate the Lutheran churches."

Another official church paper summarized the German reaction as follows: "All that was known of the Missouri Synod in Germany until three years ago was very insignificant: confessional narrowness, traditionalism, and antiquated theology. . . . Beginning with 1945 we were privileged to see the Missouri Synod from a new angle. at first from their humanitarianism. . . . But now the Missourians took an entirely new step: they invited through their representative theologians 400 German Lutheran theologians to meet in three sessions. . . . Not only the participants obtained a considerable theological enrichment, but the ultimate results will be significant for both groups of participants as well as for the entire Church. It was the wholehearted frankness and the genuinely fraternal spirit with which they met us. Their deep zeal for the house of the Lord, stemming from sincere piety, made a deep impression. We learned to know a practical activity based upon the center of the Gospel and utilizing streamlined means. We came in contact with a church whose theological labors are based upon strict truthfulness and a deep sense of spiritual responsibility; an activity which is concerned only with the Gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake. This doctrine is the center about which everything revolves: the *nervus rerum* of all its proclamation. We gained a glimpse how the narrowness of the Missourians wants to be nothing else than the necessary earthen vessels in which the treasure of the proclamation concerning sin and grace can be preserved in the midst of the disintegrating religious world of America. All evidence of Missouri's 'narrowness' is founded solely on the narrowness of the heart of the Holy Scriptures, our Christian faith, and the Gospel proclamation; a 'narrowness' which is bound upon them for the sake of conscience and the eternal welfare of souls. And strange as it may seem, in those areas in which we often are very narrow, the Missourians show great breadth, liberty, a world-wide view, virility, and humor. Is it not the most significant task of purely Lutheran theology constantly to examine the relation of true narrowness and true breadth? . . . Two types of theology within Lutheranism learned to know, to observe, and to listen to each other. May this, God grant it, lead us out of isolation and dogmatism. . . .

"And this exchange among the German Lutheran theologians made a very positive contribution. In this meeting of representatives of German Lutheranism many problems have been re-explored, new threads have been spun, and new bridges built. . . . It seemed quite natural to all participants that this project must be carried on under competent leadership. The danger which confronts the Church and

theology, against which neither the German nor the American is secure, consists in this, that the central fact of the Gospel is easily lost in external or peripheral matters. As there is a 'terrible simplification,' so there is also a 'terrible complication.' If as a result of our meeting and exchange both parties have been gripped anew by the central facts of our faith, which centripetally will reach out to include larger areas of Christian doctrine and of Christian people, then the session will prove itself to have been a "historical event," as President Behnken in deep humility said at the conclusion. . . . There was genuine unanimity that the actual proclamation of the Gospel, solely in obedience to the Word of Scripture according to the *norma normata* of the Lutheran Confessions, is the Alpha and Omega of all theology and of all ecclesiastical practice. May God grant that the consensus established in this meeting may become wider, deeper, more vital and strengthening, so that in the Lutheran Church everywhere the Gospel may be proclaimed in a unified, virile, joyous, and effective manner."

CHAPTER IV

Significant Lessons

All participants of the *Begegnung* at Bad Boll became keenly aware of the *Weltberuf* committed to Lutheranism throughout the world. The hopelessness of secularism confronts the European on every side, in the bombed-out cities, in the haggard faces of young and old, in the vain striving for something firm and lasting. Nietzsche's superman is dead in Europe. And the American philosophy of life is also due for a complete revision. There is general distrust in the omnicompetency of Liberal Theology's modern man. Nor can secularism satisfy man. Dialectical Theology on both sides of the Atlantic has shouted a piercing "No!" to modern man's secularistic philosophy and anthropocentric theology. And for this all Christians are grateful. But Dialectic Theology as now oriented is incapable of saying the Gospel's gracious "Yes" to terror-stricken consciences. This is at present the *Weltberuf* of Lutheranism. The three Reformation "*solas*" are the one and only answer to modern man's spiritual problems, for they offer him a full and a sure salvation. Lutheran theology saves man from gloomy pessimism and false optimism, because it correctly distinguishes between the secular and spiritual realms, Law and Gospel, *deus absconditus* and *deus revelatus*. Lutheran theology presents the correct world view, for it directs the Christian to his citizenship in heaven and at the same time makes him a useful member of society. It is therefore diametrically opposed on the one hand to an ascetic world flight and on the other to a this-worldly theology.

Lutheran theology also has the necessary instrument to implement its message. That is the Augustana, whose Christocentric theology, especially in its first seventeen articles, is the first comprehensive and detailed doctrinal statement which sets forth summarily the correct world view, the Scriptural plan of salvation. But more, Lutheranism, when loyal to its basic principle of *Sola Scriptura*, has also the dynamic to proclaim the saving truth. The genius of the Lutheran Church is its confessional spirit. In the Reformed Church there is room for various types of theology. Lutheranism throughout the world subscribes to the Augustana as the correct and binding exposition of Scripture and expects all its teachers and adherents to

subscribe to the pure doctrine as expounded in this basic confession. The Augustana therefore is a truly unitive standard, uniting all Lutherans throughout the world. But it is more, it is also truly ecumenical. The Augustana did not in 1530, nor does it in 1948, divide the Christian Church. The first official doctrinal pronouncement to do this, as Dr. Elert pointed out, was *Decrees and Canons of the Council of Trent*. The Augustana is still the great *magna charta* of the Christian Church and must be taken very seriously if the Christian churches hope to achieve true ecumenicity.

As a result of the church struggle in Germany, theologians have again taken the Augustana—and in many instances also the other Lutheran Confessions—very seriously. If World Lutheranism is to fulfill its *Weltberuf*, it must begin with a restudy and re-evaluation of its great heritage, the Lutheran Confessions and the concomitant spirit of true confessionalism.

This places a special burden upon the Missouri Synod, for God has led our Synod in such a way that the spirit of confessional loyalty has been developed and maintained in our Synod to a greater degree than in some other sections of World Lutheranism. This dare never be said in a spirit of boastfulness, for God has granted to other groups of Lutherans treasures and advantages which we do not possess, such as greater scholarship, a deeper appreciation of the liturgical heritage, a fuller understanding of our Church's historical continuity, a keener social consciousness, greater adaptability to changing social situations. It became quite evident at Bad Boll that the so-called repristination theology of the Missouri Synod, which was described as obscurantism, traditionalism, dead orthodoxy, is in reality its strength and driving force. Our Church must continue to promote an unwavering faith in the truth of Scripture and must make the Scriptural truth basic and normative for all its theological thinking, and by promoting this ideal and putting it consistently into operation our Synod will at the same time preserve this ideal. But in stressing the importance of retaining the purity of doctrine we dare never lose sight of the fact that faith unites us with all dear children of God. And this bond of faith which transcends all synodical and denominational lines will make the believer charitable and sympathetic toward every Christian. The Christian must therefore find the solution to the apparent tension between *love*, which is broad, forgiving, tolerant, and *faith*, which is narrow and dare not be violated in any point; for example, if one yields to error either from fear or false love. There must always be a balanced combination of a holy awe toward God's inviolable Word and a deep

and genuine love toward the brethren. May the statement of a representative theologian at Bad Boll always remain true: "*Mit der Aengstlichkeit um die reine Lehre verbindet sich in der Missouri-Synode eine weltumfassende Weite.*"

In conclusion two suggestions are submitted, the first affecting theological training, the second the problem of Lutheran unity. The thorough scholarship of Germans in general and of German theologians in particular is well known. While we no doubt have made great strides forward in the training of our pastors, there is still much room for improvement. At our theological seminaries we are concerned particularly with training men for the parish ministry. The ministry in our complex society is so diversified that a thorough training is essential. It must be the goal to develop in all future pastors a thirst for learning, particularly in the study of God's Word, both exegetical and dogmatical. At the same time we must train scholars who can penetrate more deeply into the truths of theology. We need not only good scholarly exegetes, dogmaticians, but also apologists, so that our Church can approximate the scholarly work which is done in Europe and present it to our American people on the various intellectual levels in the language of our country. It is particularly mandatory that we promote and develop a more thoroughgoing study of Luther's theology and our confessional writings. In all probability the German theologians will continue to be the torchbearers in the field of Luther research and will undoubtedly also in the future produce great literary monuments. Nevertheless, if we wish to pay more than mere lip service to Luther and to our Confessions, and if we are truly eager to provide sound leadership in our country in the study of Luther's theology, then our Seminary must become more conscious of the great responsibility resting upon Lutheran scholars in America, particularly also in our Synod.

Theological bridges have been built by the Missouri Synod in Europe. And these bridges — pontoon bridges at present — must be strengthened. But it is just as important, yes, more so, that no opportunity be overlooked to do the same among Lutherans of this country. In 1947 "Synod also resolved that we express our sincere desire that true Scriptural unity with the American Lutheran Church and with other Lutheran bodies may be achieved and that we humbly pray God for His guidance and blessings in this matter." To implement this splendid resolution, it is suggested to broaden the approach, scope, and purpose of the intersynodical conferences. This could be done through a *Begegnung* of representative theologians from the various Lutheran bodies in America. If the Augsburg Confession — which

all Lutherans accept as *norma normata* — were made the basis for the discussions, the participants would have a common basis as the point of departure. Instead of stressing first the questions which divide, the discussion would center on those points of doctrine and practice concerning which there is agreement. The points of difference would naturally also come to the surface. But there must be a sincere intention to re-examine the significant doctrinal articles of the Augsburg Confession, not primarily with the thought of synodical union in mind, but primarily to lead to doctrinal unity. With such unity the Lutheran Church would be the better equipped for the tasks that confront the Church of the Augsburg Confession today and may confront her in increasing — and probably alarming — degree in the days ahead. The problems of today are not essentially different from those of 1530, and today, as then, Lutherans should be united to set forth effectively the distinctive message of Lutheranism. To this end we of the Missouri Synod must “give thorough and prayerful study to the problems of Lutheran unity for the purpose of achieving greater clarity in our own midst.” And when we clearly see the issues, we must resolutely under God’s guidance “build theological bridges” wherever God directs us.